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THE MAHDI

PAST AND PRESENT

By JAMES DARMESTETER
PROFESSOR IN THE COLLEGE OF FRANCE

WITH PORTRAITS

Books you may hold readily in your hand are the most useful, after all
Dr. Johnson

NEW YORK
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THE MAHDI



The Child Mahdi. (Note 35.)

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In introducing this little volume to the English-reading public I am performing a pleasant duty. Not being its author, I may be allowed to say that the book is not only interesting, but also useful. Sketching as it does the origin and strength of the belief in the Mahdi, it illustrates a point of very great importance in regard to our Egyptian policy. History repeats itself so closely among the Mussulmans, that to recount the adventures of former Mahdis is to tell the past, present, and probable future history of the Mahdi who has been giving us so much trouble of late. He is no more the first of his kind than he will be the last; for, from the dawn of Islamism, a Mahdi has always been expected, and he will be looked for as long as a single Mussulman remains. The failure of one Mahdi to

successfully demonstrate his heavenly mission has always been followed by the uprising of another, his defeat having proved him to be the false prophet who, according to tradition, is to precede and herald the approach of the true one.* In the following pages M. Darmesteter traces the history of the Mahdi from the first year of the Mahometan era (622 A.D.) to the year of grace 1885—1302 of the Hegira.

In the present volume the reader may learn a lesson concerning Mussulman character which should not fail to make a deep impression upon him, and the perusal of its pages will convince him more than any words of mine could possibly do of the necessity of adapting our foreign policy to suit the peculiarities of the peoples with whom we come in contact.

If a lady may be allowed to express an opinion on political matters, I would observe that one of the greatest faults to be found with English action in the Soudan is that it is not guided by a knowledge of Arab character. We English are too apt to consider that all people are constituted alike, and can be treated on precisely the same principles of

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* See Appendix A.

fairness and honesty; we do not take sufficiently into consideration the habits, prejudices, rooted beliefs, and the wiliness and treachery of our brothers in the East—if indeed we can call those brothers whose very natures differ so widely from our own. This ignorance of the mental constitutions of those with whom we come in contact cannot but be disastrous. It was a powerful factor in producing the horrors of the Indian Mutiny, and without it Khartoum would not have fallen, and Gordon might now have been alive.

I have endeavored in my translation to adhere to the original as closely as possible, but if my friend M. Darmesteter should find here and there that an allusion has been omitted,* or that my rendering is not quite literal, he will, I feel sure, pardon me, on the grounds that I was more anxious to give "the spirit" than "the letter" of his work, and that on the principle stated above I have tried to adapt it to the idiosyncrasies of the people for whom I have prepared it.

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* M. Darmesteter's *brochure* was originally delivered as a lecture before the Scientific Association of France, at the Sorbonne, on February 28, 1885. It contains many allusions to French politics, parties, and literature, of more interest to the French audience than they would be to the English reader.

I am responsible only for those notes which are signed with my initials, and for the Appendix in which I give some of the most reliable information I have been able to obtain about the present Mahdi and the fall of Khartoum, although I cannot vouch for the authenticity of everything therein published.

ADA S. BALLIN.

14 TAVISTOCK SQUARE, W.C.
May 4, 1885.

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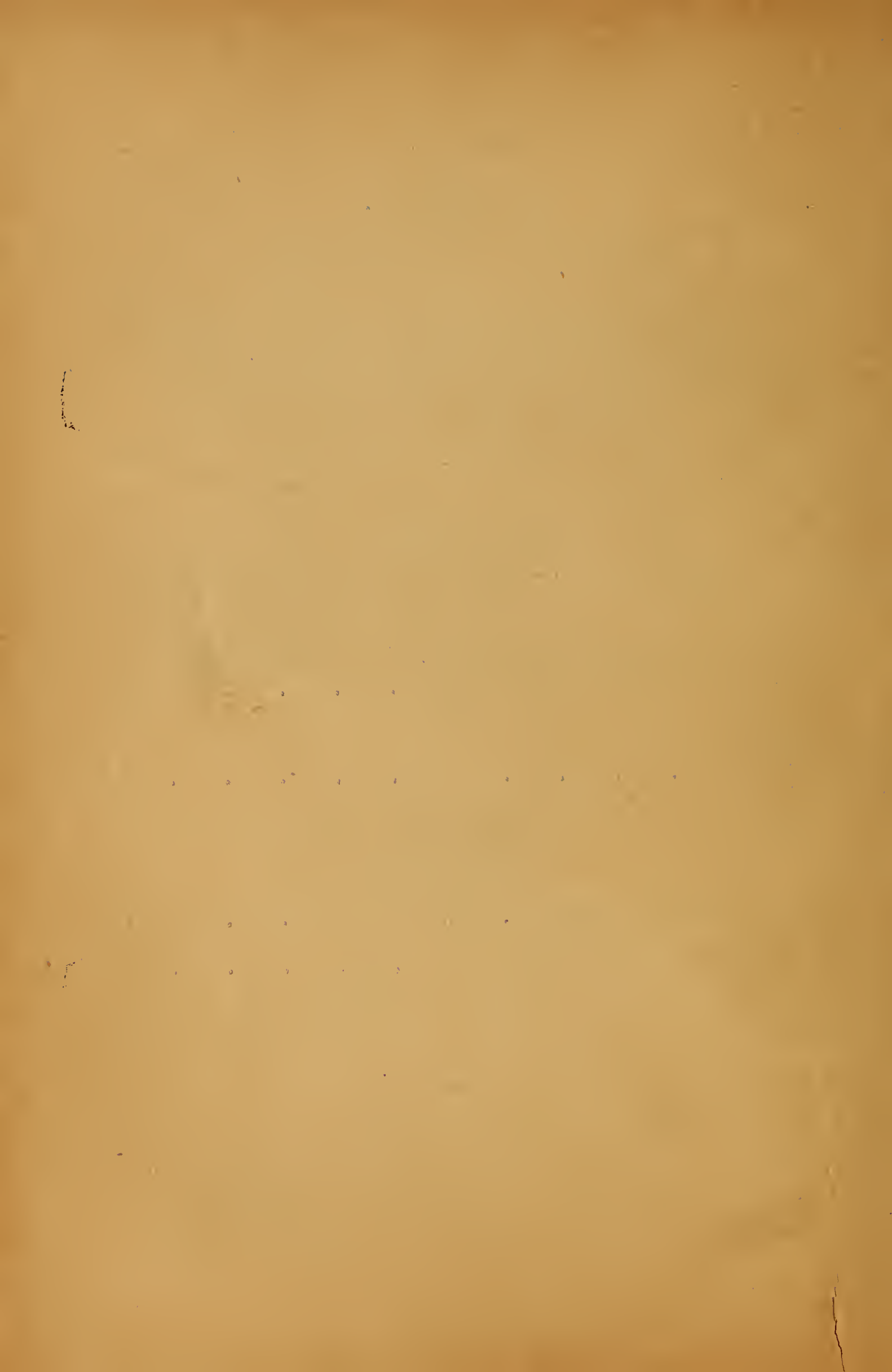
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THE MAHDI.

I.

THE IDEA OF THE MAHDI.

At the time of Mahomet's appearance there were in Arabia, besides the ancient national paganism, three foreign religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism, the prevailing religion of Persia before the Mahometan conquest, which had been propagated in Northern Arabia by means of commerce, and in the south, in Yemen, by conquest. Mahomet did not take much trouble to be original: he borrowed his doctrines from the Jews and Christians, and his mythology from Jews, Christians, and Persians. No religion was ever built up with such cheap materials.

A belief common to the three parent religions

was that in a supernatural being, who at the end of time would bring back Order and Justice which had been banished from the world, and thus prelude the kingdom of immortality and endless bliss.

This is not the place to introduce a history of the idea of a Messiah, which is familiar to most of our readers. For our present purpose it is sufficient to recall the fact that the conception originated in Judaism, and gave birth to Christianity, and that it had not taken a definite form, either among Jews or Christians, until subjected to the influence of Persian mythology. Hence, under its three forms, —Jewish, Christian, and Persian,—in spite of a certain variety of detail, there is a strong resemblance in the principal points of the belief.

In all three religions the coming of the Saviour was to be preceded by the letting loose of all the powers of evil, personified among the Jews by the invasion and ravages of Gog and Magog; among the Christians by the Dragon, or the Beast of Revelation, and by a false prophet, the prophet of Satan, called Antichrist; and among the Persians by the serpent Zohâk (1), the incarnation of Ahriman, the Spirit, of Evil.

Again, all three maintained alike that the Saviour

was to be a direct lineal descendant of the most august personage in the national tradition of each: among the Jews and Christians He was called the Messiah, and was to be a descendant of the prophet king of Israel, David; among the Persians he was Saoshyant (2), and was to be a son of the Persian prophet Zoroaster.

In each of the three religions the most important historic character was to play a leading part in the last act of the drama.

The Messianic doctrine of the Mussulman is borrowed from Christianity. Mussulmans, like Christians, believe that when the time has come the Saviour will destroy the Beast of the Apocalypse, the false prophet of the last hour—Antichrist—whom they call *Deddjâl*, the impostor; but Islamism could not give the supreme and decisive *rôle* to Jesus.

The religion of Islam acknowledges the mission of Jesus, but not His divinity. Since the Creation, it teaches, five prophets had appeared before the birth of Mahomet—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus—each being greater than his predecessor, and each bringing a fuller and higher revelation than the last. Jesus ranks above all the prophets of the old dispensation, but below those of the new,

inaugurated by Mahomet. In the final struggle He will be but the servant and auxiliary of a more august personage—THE MAHDI.

The literal meaning of the word *Mahdi* is not, as the newspapers generally assert, *He who leads*,—a meaning more in consonance with European ideas, —but *He who is led.* The fundamental idea of Islamism is the incapability of man to guide himself—to find the truth, the right path—and that to ignorant man God sends now and again His prophets—men whom He has inspired with knowledge, and to whom He has revealed what ought to be done.

The prophet in himself is as ignorant, as frail, as limited in his powers, as the rest of humanity; but God dictates to him, makes him His mouthpiece; and if he leads his fellow-men it is because he alone is the "well-guided one," led by God—the *Mahdi.*

The word *Mahdi* is only an epithet which may be applied to any prophet, or even to any ordinary person; but used as a proper name it indicates him who is "well guided" beyond all others, the Mahdi *par excellence,* who is to end the drama of the world, and of whom Jesus shall only be the vicar.

Jesus is to come and destroy the Antichrist, massa-

cre the Jews, and convert Christians and idolaters to Islamism; having done this He will assist the Mahdi in the celebration of the last great service, and will humbly repeat the prayer uttered by the Mahdi, as the faithful in the mosque repeat the words pronounced by the *Imâm* (3), or leader of prayer. Then the trump of the resurrection will sound, and God will come to judge the living and the dead (4).

II.

THE FORMATION OF THE IDEA OF THE MADHI.

The Koran does not speak of the Mahdi, but it seems certain that Mahomet must have announced him, although it is impossible to say exactly what idea he had formed on the subject. Among the words which tradition attributes to him are the following: "Even though time shall have but one day more to last, God will call up a man of my family who will fill the earth with justice, as it is now filled with iniquity." (5) In other words, the Mahdi was to be of the blood of Mahomet.

It is doubtful whether Mahomet really explained himself so clearly on the point. He left no sons, and there is nothing to indicate that in prophecy he admitted a principle so antagonistic to the anarchist spirit of the Arab race as that of heredity. He never, either living or dying, appointed his heir, acting on the principle that God chooses whom He will, and is not constrained to make His

gifts descend with the blood from father to son; His favors are not dependent on the accident of birth. If the prophet disappears without having cast his mantle on the shoulders of a favored disciple, it is the duty of the people to decide on to whose shoulders it shall fall. This question arose at the death of Mahomet, and it was quickly decided. He left but one daughter, Fatima, whom he had given in marriage to his young cousin, Ali, the first of his proselytes, who was at the same time the most ardent and devoted. A considerable party supported Ali, but three times his claims were set aside, three times in twenty-three years the succession of the Prophet, the Caliphat, left open by death, passed into the hands of strangers—Abu-Bekr, Omar, and Othman.

The son-in-law of the Prophet at length succeeded to the Caliphat, but he succumbed in the struggle against the fierce animosity which beset him on all sides, and the son of one of the greatest enemies of the Prophet, of one of those who had fought to the very last for the ancient idolatry of Arabia, Moaviah, Prefect of Damascus, head of the family of the Omeiades, founded the hereditary Caliphat on the corpse of Ali.

The Caliphs of Damascus were fearful miscreants,

who drank wine openly instead of drinking it in secret, as a pious Mussulman should. Their typical representative was Welid II., who used the Koran as a target to shoot at in sport, saying to it in verse: "In the day of resurrection you can tell the Lord that it was the Caliph Welid who tore you to rags;" or that Abd-el-Melik, who the moment he was saluted by the title of Caliph, shut the Koran which hitherto he had always had by him, saying: "Now we two must part company." Yet it was under the auspices of these half idolatrous princes that Islam made those marvellous conquests which, like those of the French Revolution under Napoleon, are still the wonder of history. It is the rule that a new principle can only triumph in the world by means of those who corrupt it and turn it to their own advantage. It was at the time of this triumph of the Omeiades that the doctrine of the Mahdi began to grow definite, and to be developed in favor of the descendants of Ali.

Because in the interval a great event had happened—the conquest of Persia. That immense empire, which for four centuries had stood its ground at Rome and Byzantium, had fallen, in a few years, beneath the attack of a few Arab squadrons shouting the war-cry, *Allahakbar*, "God is

great." The national resistance was practically nothing. The armies of the State dispersed, the people submitted without a struggle. Nay more, they adopted the new religion all but unanimously, although it was not imposed upon them; for the Arabs, fanatics as they were, did not at first, as is supposed, offer the choice between the Koran and the sword: they made a third alternative—the payment of tribute, an alternative the adoption of which the Caliphs greatly preferred to that of either of the others, for it had the great advantage of filling their coffers. The success of the Koran alarmed their ministers of finance, and as the uncompromising Mussulmans complained, it seemed as if God had sent the Prophet not as an apostle, but as a tax-collector.

Almost the whole of Persia was converted, and willingly; for the Arabian invasion was both a religious and a political deliverance for her. She had experienced under the last national kings a period of terrible anarchy, and the State religion, Zoroastrianism, a religion of pure and high morality, had nevertheless given rise to intolerance—a new thing in the East. Charged with troublesome practices and annoying prohibitions to which the Sassanides—the first sovereigns who invented the formula

of the throne supported by the altar (6)—had given secular support, Zoroastrianism had lost all hold on the mind; moreover, as it was hostile to that spirit of asceticism which people like to see in their religion even if they do not practise it themselves, it ceased to be respected without ceasing to be wearisome, and it could last no longer, because without restricting the passions it hindered the interests of its professors.

Thus from the first attack a great part of Persia became Mussulman, although with a curious Islamism it is true. Islam relieved her of her former inconvenient creed, but she introduced into the new religion something far dearer to any nation than its religion, dogmas, or form of worship—her whole mythology.

When the struggle began between Ali and the Omeiades, Persia was in reality very little interested. What did it matter to Persians whether the Arab Ali or the Arab Moaviah held the sceptre of the Caliph? They would side with the vanquished, whichever party it was; for to do so was to take up arms against a master. The national spirit had soon revived.

They had no idea of returning to the ancient religion, for their recollections of it were still too

vivid. They would remain Mussulmans; but Islamism is one thing and the Arabs are another: by the former they would abide, but they would have as little to do with the latter as possible. Ali being defeated, was thought to be in the right, and having once sided with him, they did so heart and soul, because for the Persians Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, and the sons of Ali, grandchildren of the Prophet, represented the principle of heredity, a divine right.

The Persian constitution for centuries past had rested on divine right, a principle which was, moreover, common to all Aryan nations in the early periods of their development. The Persians, like the Hindus, and like the Greeks of Homer's time, believed that there are among men certain families directly descended from God, to whom regal power belongs by the right of their superhuman nature. These kings, these "sons of Zeus," as the Greeks called them, received and transmitted from father to son, according to the Persian belief, a subtle flame, a sort of aureole of celestial origin, which was called the *Farri yazdan*, "The glory coming from God." The king was God, son of God. On the inscriptions which remain from the time of these princes, they are proclaimed to be "divine, of celes-

tial race" (7). In their correspondence they styled themselves "Brother of the Sun and Moon, Man among Gods, God among Men" (8); and on their crowns they bore a representation of the celestial globe, to remind people that they were the axis or pole of humanity (9).

During four centuries, under the Sassanides, Persia had been glorious and powerful, because the power had remained with those of legitimate descent and divine blood. Even the great Sassanides did not think themselves firm on the throne until they had fabricated a relationship through the Parthians, and the successors of Alexander, to the race of the Achemenides, lineal descendants of the first mythical heroes of the *Avesta*, Feridun, and Jemshid. The decadence of Persia had commenced on the day when usurpation interrupted the line of divine succession. Thus for a Persian believing in Islamism, the pretentions and triumph of the Omeiades, besides their worthlessness from the religious standpoint, were an outrage against reason and right.

Ali was hardly dead before he became enshrined in legend and in myth. Ali, cousin, brother, adopted son of the Prophet, his first convert, and his bravest defender; the warrior whom none had

ever vanquished; "at the birth of whom," said Caliph Abu Bekr, "the bravest swords had returned to their scabbards;" the Samson of his time, who, at the assault of Khaiber, had torn the gate of the town from its hinges and used it as a buckler; the beautiful, the noble, the charitable, the generous, the wise and learned Ali, of whom the Prophet had said, "I am the stronghold of knowledge, and Ali is the gate of it;" Ali, three times deprived by intrigue of his inheritance, and falling at last beneath the dagger of assassins, became for his admirers a sort of heroic Christ militant (10).

Hence the great schism which from the first divided the camp of Islam. While the greater number of Mussulmans, the men of tradition, the *Sunnites*, revered the first three elected Caliphs equally with Ali, the others principally recruited among the Persians, regarded them as usurpers, and acknowledged only the son-in-law of the Prophet as *imâm*, or legitimate chief. They founded the sect of Alides or *Imâmians;* that is to say, those who believe that there is always a sinless *imâm*, whose existence is absolutely necessary to maintain the order of the universe, that there is but one legitimate *imâm* in the world as there is but one God in heaven, and that this dignity of *imâm* is inherent in the race of Ali, chosen by God. This is

the sect which is best known in Europe under the name which the orthodox party has given it of *Shiites*, or *sectarians*.

Among his adherents the worship of Ali speedily took on all the characteristics of a religion. He was in part divine; he was not dead, but had ascended to heaven; it was he who was seen in storms riding on the hurrying clouds; it was he whose voice was heard in thunder, and whose whip was seen to writhe in lightning flashes. It is said that even during his lifetime he was adored by some as the incarnation of the Deity. Some men exclaimed in his presence, "Thou art God!" Ali, indignant, and ignorant of his own divinity, had their heads cut off; but the heads rolling on the earth continued to cry, "Ali, thou art God!" (11)

Ali left two sons by Fatima, Hassan and Hussein: Hassan was poisoned by the Omeiades; Hussein, abandoned in the struggle by the partisans who had called him forth, was massacred at Kerbela with all his family after a heroic resistance and scenes of horror, the representation of which gave birth in Persia to a monotonous but admirable drama known to Europeans through the works of MM. de Gobineau and Chodzko (12), and which even now, every year, makes the most incredulous Persian weep with sorrow and rage.

The Omeiades might well triumph, besiege and sack the sacred towns Mecca and Medina, and bear the arms of Islam beyond the Oxus and the Indus, to the Caucasus and the Pyrenees; but they were only masters *de facto;* there was no legitimate chief, no *imâm* but of the race of Ali. However dark was the present, in the future from Ali must arise the Saviour, the Mahdi, for the sacred trust of the Prophet's blood had been given to Ali. The Zoroastrian Persians believed that the Saviour, Saoshyant, was to be born of the blood of their prophet Zoroaster. The converted Persians had only to change the proper names. They told how one day Ali had said to the Prophet: "O Prophet of God! will the Mahdi be of our or of another family?" and the Prophet had made answer: "Certainly he will be of our own. It is through our agency that God will complete His work, just as it was through us that He commenced it" (13).

The idea of the Mahdi once formed it circulated throughout the Mussulman world: we will follow it rapidly in its course among the Persians, the Turks, the Egyptians, and the Arabs of the Soudan; but without for an instant pretending to pass in review all the Mahdis who have appeared upon the prophetic stage; for their name is *Legion.*

III.

THE MAHDI IN PERSIA. FIRST PERIOD.

Hussein, the second son of Ali and Fatima, left but one child, Ali, who was only ten years old—too young to serve as a rallying-point for the disaffected. But by a wife other than Fatima, Ali had left another son, named "Mohammed, son of the Hanefite." He lived quietly at Mecca, far from the dangers of active life; but all the hearts of the Alides turned towards him. An ambitious man named Mokhtar then rose in his name and took the title of "Lieutenant of the Mahdi," and thus for the first time the name Mahdi appeared in history only half a century after the death of the Prophet.

This Mokhtar was a clever fellow, who in turn held in with all parties; and to palliate his changes of opinion, invoked a dogma of his own invention, which is strongly to be recommended to political theologians—the dogma of the mutability of the Deity—according to which the intellectual activity

of God is so great that necessarily His ideas change every instant; and, naturally, those who follow the inspirations of God ought—it is a sacred duty—to try and imitate these variations. He announced to his soldiers that if they grew faint in battle the angels would come to succor them in the form of birds; and at a critical moment he had flights of pigeons set free, a stratagem which was marvellously successful. He had borne before his soldiers a seat bought at a bric-à-brac shop in Koufa, which he held up to the veneration of the faithful as being the seat of Ali, and which he said was to be for them what the Ark of the Covenant was for the children of Israel: with this palladium they would be invincible (14).

Mohammed, feeling that he would never be anything but a puppet in the hands of this man, allowed him to act without protest. Mokhtar perished in spite of all his cunning, but none the less did Mohammed, without effort of his own, remain the Mahdi for his partisans. This, however, did not prevent his dying in his turn, although his followers refused to believe his death, and announced that he would return.

This was the first invasion into Islam of an old myth familiar to Persian mythology which we shall

meet again hereafter—the myth of a hero believed to be dead, but who, either hidden or asleep, awaits the time for his return. It is one of the favorite legends of Aryan, and more especially of Persian mythology, and has its origin in the nature-myth of the reappearance of the sun after it has been shrouded in night, or clouds. The brilliant hero wept as dead comes forth again triumphant, not having been dead but asleep. Hence when darkness is victorious there is the hope of a bright awakening. The God is not dead; He sleeps and will wake again (15).

Tales like this are in harmony with the imagination of the people, which in face of present sorrows loves to see a glimmer of hope in the distant future. Among peoples tormented with a national dream it is the expectation of a new era. During how many centuries did the British Celts await the coming of Arthur, who was said to be resting in the Island of Avalon, where the fairy Morgain was healing his wounds, and who would leave it to drive away the Saxons from his land and conquer the world? The Servians look for the return of Marko Kralievich, who sleeps in a cavern where God bore him from the midst of a battle. There are few who will not recall the story of Frederick Barbarossa and the

Castle of Kaiserslàutern; and in 1870 the German poets exclaimed that Barbarossa had awakened, and that the withered tree had grown green again (16). In 1848, at the news of the Austrian defeats in Italy, the report arose that when only two soldiers should remain of the emperor's forces, the Subterranean Guest would reappear and, like a hurricane, sweep away the Italian army. In Portugal more than one old woman still tells how Dom Sebastian, with whom the greatness of the nation was ingulfed three centuries ago beneath the sands of Africa, has not really perished, but will soon return with a fleet from Brazil; Dom Louis will abdicate at his coming, and the great days of Vasco di Gama will recommence.

During many centuries the imagination of the Persians was busy with legends such as these. No other people has had so many heroes asleep and ready to reappear.

The most illustrious was Keresâspa, a destroyer of demons, who after innumerable and marvellous exploits was wounded in his sleep by the lance of a Turanian. But dead he still lives; ninety-nine thousand nine hundred angels watch over his body in the plain of Kaboul. At the end of time, when the serpent Zohâk, the incarnation of Ahriman,

chained up by Feridun on the mountain Demavend, shall break asunder his chains and traverse the world in triumph, like the Christian Antichrist and the Mussulman Deddjâl, Keresâspa will arise from his slumber to slay him with one fell blow.

Besides Keresâspa there are many other immortals who await in the tomb the hour of the final struggle: Khumbya, Aghraêratha, and the companions-in-arms of the king Kaikhosrav.

Besides these there are heroes who have never died, but who wait in distant or invisible regions: Urvatatnara, the son of Zoroaster, who carried his father's law into the subterranean kingdom of Yima; Peshôtanu, son of the king Gushtâsp, whom Zoroaster caused to drink a cup of sacred milk which rendered him immortal. Such is the crowd which at the end of time will surround Saoshyant, the yet unborn son of Zoroaster, when he appears to kill Death and preside at the resurrection (17).

When Mohammed, the son of Ali, the first Mahdi, had disappeared, and there was no possibility of doubt that he was beyond reach, the old mythology came to sustain the neo-Mussulmans in their new faith. The poets sang that he was hidden for a time near Medina, in the valley of Radwa, where water and honey flow, waiting the

day when he should reappear at the head of his horsemen preceded by the standard (18). Mohammed himself, they said, had pointed out with his finger the pass among the mountains whence the Mahdi should come forth to gather together around him armies as numerous as the flakes of vapor of which the clouds are formed; and there were people who took up their abode at the favored spot, and died there waiting for him (19).

The time of his absence was fixed at seventy years, the period assigned by the Bible as that of the duration of human life. A fragment of one of these poems by a great poet of the time, the *Himyarite Seid* (20), remains, and its character may be seen from the following few verses rendered according to the beautiful translation in French by M. Barbier de Meynard:

"O thou for whom I would give my life, long is thy stay in this mountain!
Sorely are we oppressed, we who implore thee, we who proclaim thee Caliph and Imâm.
All the nations of the earth reckon seventy years for the length of thine absence.
No, the son of Khawlah (21) has not tasted the cup of death. The earth does not hide his remains.
He watches in the depths of the valley Radwa, in the midst of the conversation of angels. . . .

O valley of Radwa, what has become of him whom thou hidest from our eyes, and for the love of whom our minds are distracted?
How long shall our waiting last, O son of the Prophet; thou who livest nourished by God?" (22).

While the people were waiting for the return of Mohammed, Hussein's son, the grandchild of Ali, was growing up. The dead cannot long hold their ground against the living, and the mass of the Alides abandoned the invisible *imam* for him who was present and visible. He was poisoned. His son Mohammed succeeded him in the veneration of the Alides, but met a similar fate to that of his father. Poison was the temporal consecration of the *imâms*. Zeid, a younger brother of Mohammed, then proclaimed himself Mahdi, and raised the standard of revolt. He perished, and the Caliph had his naked body strung up to a gibbet, and insulted it through his poets, who said, "We have fastened your Zeid to the trunk of a palm-tree; I have never seen a Mahdi hanging on a gibbet before" (23).

IV.

THE MAHDI IN PERSIA. SECOND PERIOD.

The days of the Omeiades were numbered. After a century of power they disappeared in a moment before the Abbassides; the whole royal family, eighty persons in all, invited to a banquet given ostensibly for purposes of reconciliation, were strangled by their enemies, who held a triumphant orgie over their dead bodies. The Alides then began to breathe again, and thought their chance had come, for it had been with their support and in their name that the Abbassides had struggled, and naturally they believed this triumph to be a victory for themselves.

They were, however, speedily and cruelly disabused of their confidence. The Abbassides, like themselves, belonged to the family of Mahomet, being descended from Abbas, the Prophet's uncle. As long as the struggle had lasted they had concealed their personal pretensions, and given them-

selves out to be the avengers of Ali and his sons; they had wrought up the fanaticism of the Alides to a pitch of terrible excitement, and thus caused Persia to side with them; throughout the empire they had sent missionaries to stir up the burning memory of the scenes of Kerbela, who had thrown Mussulman Persia into an ecstasy of grief at the Passion of Ali and his sons, the divine martyrs. These emissaries made their dupes swear fidelity to a Caliph of the family of the Prophet without mentioning his name. Their chief agent and executioner was a man from Eastern Persia, named Abu-Muslim, who had formerly been a saddler by trade. He was a stern and cruel fanatic, one of those men who, in the words of a poet of the time, never drank water unmixed with blood.

As the star of the Omeiades sank, the Abbassides began gradually to throw the Alides into the shade. Were they not also of the race of the Prophet? and to enforce their claims they spread a report that the first Mahdi, Mohammed, the son of the Hanefite, had duly transmitted his rights to one of their ancestors (24); they forged new traditions, apocryphal words attributed to Mahomet, who naturally was not in a position to disclaim them. They affirmed that Mahomet had said one day to his uncle Abbas,

"In ye shall rest prophecy and sovereignty." Another day he had said plainly to him, "Thou art the Father of the Caliphs amongst whom shall be Al Mahdi, and amongst whom shall be one who shall pray together with Jesus, the son of Mary, O uncle, dost thou not know that Al Mahdi shall be of thy descendants, the prospered of God, happy and approved?" (25). Thus when the Alides were preparing to mount the throne left vacant by the Omeiades, they found their avengers blocking the way to it. The principal captains of the Abbassides were Alides, who had thought they were laboring for the descendants of Ali. These were got rid of one by one.

Abu-Muslim went to rejoin the six hundred thousand victims which he is said to have slain with his own hand. His fall was brought about by a letter that he sent to the Caliph Almansor, and which ran as follows:

"I had a guide of the family of the Prophet, who was to teach me the doctrines and the duties prescribed by God. I thought that in him I had found knowledge; but he led me astray even by the aid of the Koran itself, which he falsified by his love for the wealth of this world. He bade me in the name of God draw my sword, banish every

feeling of pity from my heart, accept no justification from my adversaries, and pardon no error. All this have I done. I prepared for you the way to power, for I did not know you; but now God has led me from my error—now I know you only too well; now I regret and am penitent. May God pardon all the wrongs I have committed; but if He does not pardon me, if He punishes me, I must still acknowledge that He is righteous" (26).

To so great an extent was it the ancient Persian mythology which inspired the movement of the Alides, that Abu-Muslim found an avenger in Sinbad, a priest of fire, belonging to an ancient Persian Zoroastrian sect, the sect of Mazdak. He went about proclaiming that Abu-Muslim was not dead, that at the moment of execution he had invoked the supreme and secret name of God, and had escaped from the hands of Almansor, flying away in the form of a white dove. He had retired to a castle made of copper in the company of the Mahdi, who would soon leave it with him, with Mazdak for his Vizier. It took seven years of fierce warfare to put an end to Sinbad (27).

Very soon Abu-Muslim, growing more and more in importance after his death, from precursor of the Mahdi, came to be regarded as himself an in-

carnation of the divinity. His apostle and successor was his former secretary, a working fuller, who was called the Veiled Prophet (28), *El-Mocanna*, because he wore a veil ostensibly so that he should not dazzle mortal eyes by the splendor of his divine light, really to hide a horrible wound which had disfigured him. He taught that God had appeared nine times in human form. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Mahomet, Ali, and the Son of the Hanefite had been the first seven incarnations. He had afterwards appeared with the features of Abu-Muslim; and now He at the same time revealed and veiled Himself in the person of El-Mocanna. By the aid of miracles, that is to say, of conjuring tricks, of which he was past master, the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan came to be regarded as divine. Three armies sent out against him were destroyed; but at last, surrounded and at bay, he set fire to his fortress and disappeared like an archangel in the flames. Centuries afterwards he still had worshippers (29).

The Abbassides might easily have turned this stream of religious mania to their own advantage. Among the soldiers of Abu-Muslim were three thousand men from Khorassan, the Ravandis, who discovered one fine day that the God whom they

sought on earth was that very Caliph Almansor whom they had placed on the throne; moreover, that the soul of Adam had passed into his captain of the guards, and the Angel Gabriel into the prefect of the city.

Each time they saw Almansor they prostrated themselves, saying, "Behold God; he has in him a portion of God." He was recommended to put them to death as heretics, but he replied wittily enough: "I would rather see them in hell and faithful to me, than that they should revolt and go to heaven." One day they began to walk round the palace like the pilgrims at Mecca walk round the Caaba; they interfered with traffic, and Almansor, who was in a bad temper that day, had them put in prison, and forbade their assembling under pain of death. They, however, gathered together, and decided that that portion of God which had entered into him had left him, that God had cursed him, and that he must be killed so that the Deity might enter into some one else. They marched to the palace, and almost took it by a *coup de main;* but the devotion of a servant saved the Caliph's life and his crown (30).

After a ray of hope the road to martyrdom again lay open before the Alides. The second Caliph

Almansor had given his son and heir the name of Mahdi, as a protest against their claims; but an empty title was not enough to reduce the legitimate heirs to silence. Two Alides, brothers, Mohammed and Ibrahim, rose at the same time, one in Arabia and the other on the banks of the Euphrates. Both perished. The Alides had only changed executioners; but the executioners belonged to the family, and that made all the difference. The sister of Mohammed, when she heard of his death, exclaimed in a joyful tone: "God be praised that he did not flee, and did not fall alive into their hands. He was killed like his father, his uncles, and his ancestors" (31).

The head of the family of the Alides, the legitimate Imam Jafar, who was alive at the fall of the Omeiades, had died by poison like his predecessors; his successor, the seventh Imam, Musa, was poisoned in his turn by the Caliph of *Arabian Nights'* celebrity, Haroun al Rashid.

Under the eighth Imâm, Ali Riza, a sudden change seemed about to take place. The Caliph was Almamun, a strange man. He was a liberal inasmuch as he sent orthodox people to the gal-

lows, a form of liberalism by no means rare—in the East. Now on reflection this Caliph began to have doubts as to the legality of the power of the Abbassides; hence arose the remarkable spectacle of one of the Abbassides who actually sided with the Alides. His scruples did not lead him so far as to abdicate himself, but he disinherited his sons, declared Ali Riza as his successor, and replaced the black banner of the Abbassides by the green standard of the Alides (32).

The Caliph's family and the army of his functionaries on this threatened to revolt, and Almamun got himself out of the difficulty by the simple means of poisoning his *protégé*. The place where the Imâm perished, Meshhed, is to the present day the great resort for Persian pilgrims (33).

The three Imâms, Mohammed, Ali, and Hassan, next succeeded from father to son, and each of these theoretical rulers of the Moslem world perished in turn by poison (34). Hassan the eleventh left a son, Mohammed, who at the time of his father's death was six years old. The Caliph kept this child a prisoner near his own person, in the town of Hillah; but at the age of twelve years he disappeared, probably also by the agency of poison.

The direct line of Imâms was therefore broken

for ever; there was no longer hope of a Mahdi. But the logic of the people of course drew the conclusion that the child was not dead but hidden, and that he would return when he chose, being the Master of Time. Persian engravings* represent him with the features of a child, holding the sacred book in his hand, seated in a grotto into which rays of light are penetrating (35).

For a long time there were members of the family of Ali who awoke every day with the hope of witnessing the reappearance of the twelfth Imâm, the last lineal descendant of Fatima, whom they called the *expected Fatimide*. "They go forth from their villages on horseback and armed," says a contemporary; "thus accoutred they go to meet their Imâm; they return deceived in their hopes, but not discouraged" (36).

At Hillah, near Bagdad, the last place where he was seen, a mosque was erected, over the door of which hung a silken curtain. This was where he dwelt, in the holy of holies; it was "the sanctuary of the Master of the Hour." Every day after the midday prayer, a hundred horsemen, sword in

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* A copy of one of these appears as the frontispiece of this volume.

hand, went to receive from the commander of the town a horse which was saddled and bridled, and which they led to the sanctuary with sound of trumpets and drums. When arrived at the door they cried out, "In the name of God, O Master of the Hour, in the name of God, come forth! For corruption has appeared and great is wrong-doing." And they continued thus to appeal to him to the sound of trumpets until the time of evening prayer (37). The Mahdi, however, did not come forth.

At last, in the sixteenth century, the Alides gained the upper hand in Persia. A sheikh, who proclaimed himself to be a descendant of Musa, the seventh Imâm, founded the last great national dynasty of Persia, the dynasty of the great Sufi. But the Sufis, though Alides by birth, only regarded themselves as lieutenants of the Imâm, the provisional administrators of Iran. As long as the Imâm was absent they were only rulers owing to accident. Thus the Sufi did not call himself "King of kings," but "Slave of the king of the country," and even still more humbly, "The watch-dog at the gate of Ali." The true king of Iran was the absent Mahdi (38). In their palace at Ispahan the Sufis always kept two horses magnifi-

cently harnessed, ready to receive him when he should deign to take once more the reins of government. One of these horses was for the Mahdi, the other for his lieutenant, Jesus Christ (39).

V.

THE MAHDI IN AFRICA.

Hitherto we have remained in the East, and have only witnessed the deceptions and checks suffered by the Mahdi. Let us now turn to the West, and observe some of his triumphs.

Two Mahdis, one in the tenth century in Egypt, the other in the twelfth century in Morocco, founded dynasties which have left their name in history —the first was that of the Fatimides, one of the most glorious dynasties of Islam, which lasted three centuries; the second was that of the Almohades, the conquerors of Spain.

In consequence of intestine quarrels among the Alides, a powerful sect left the Imâmians. This was the sect called Ismaelis, whence came later that sect well known in the history of France, the Assassins, or the Old Man of the Mountain (40). A Persian oculist named Abdallah, the son of Meimoun (41), sworn enemy of the Arabs, took the

post of leader of the party of which he made a purely philosophical sect, destroying the letter of the Koran by allegorical interpretations.

So as to work more easily on the credulity of the people, he pretended that he came of the race of Ali, and sent missionaries to Arabia and Africa to preach the new law, and announce the coming of the Mahdi. The Mahdi delayed, but came at last in the person of his grandson, Obeid-Allah.

Obeid-Allah laid claim to Northern Africa, where the Berbers bore the yoke of the Arabs and of orthodoxy with impatience, and where the missionary of the new sect, Abu-Abdallah, had preached with marvellous success, both by word and sword. He announced that the Mahdi was about to appear, to subjugate the earth, revive the dead, and make *the sun rise from the west* (42). The Mahdi coming at the call of his apostle was arrested at Tripoli and thrown into prison by the governor of the Aghlabites, the local dynasty, vassal of the Caliph of Bagdad; nevertheless his lieutenant continued a triumphal march, expelled the Aghlabite prince and, in the absence of the captive Mahdi, proclaimed God as regent.

For several months the coinage, instead of bearing the name of a king, was stamped with these words:

"I have accomplished the testimony of God; may the enemies of God be scattered;" on all weapons he had engraved: "Arms with which to fight in the cause of God;" and on the harness of horses: "To God belongs the kingdom." Having thus enthroned the Deity during this interregnum, he marched on the town where His terrestrial representative was imprisoned, delivered him, made him mount on horseback, and marching before him with the chiefs of the tribes, said to the people with tears of joy: "Behold your master." On the Friday following he had his name proclaimed in public prayer with the title of "Mahdi, prince of true believers."

The Mahdi up till that time had only been a passive conqueror, but he soon began to show that he could be active also. He began by having Abu-Abdallah assassinated. "Stop, my son!" exclaimed Abu-Abdallah, seizing the arm of his murderer; the man replied, "He whom you have enjoined us to obey has ordered us to slay you." Abu-Abdallah had only succeeded too well in his work as apostle. To show that he was not ungrateful, the Mahdi himself recited the prayers for the dead over the corpse of his benefactor.

Some people still doubted Obeid-Allah; the sun

was against him, and with sceptical obstinacy continued to rise in the east; then the Mahdi had shown perfectly well that he was able to kill, but had not yet demonstrated that he could revive the dead. One day a sheikh dared to say to him, "If you are the Mahdi, perform a miracle, for we doubt very much whether you are what you give yourself out to be." The Mahdi replied by having his head cut off. It was not a miracle, but it is extremely doubtful whether any miracle could have served better to shut the mouth of the incredulous!

The Mahdi required a capital, but he did not care to occupy either Tunis or Kairoan, as there were too many Arabs in both places, and he did not feel safe among them. He traversed the coast of Tunis and reached a peninsula which had the form of a closed fist. There, after having consulted the stars as to a favorable day and hour, he laid the foundation-stone of a city over which the French flag floats to-day, but which still bears the name he gave—Mahdia—the City of the Mahdi.

He surrounded it with a strong wall, with gates of iron, each leaf of which weighed five hundredweight. In the hill he had an arsenal constructed which could contain a hundred galleys, and when the town was finished, he cried: "Now I am reas-

sured as to the fate of the Fatimides. I have built this town so that they may take refuge here for a short time."

To his mind, Mahdia was, in very fact, only a provisional shelter: the Mahdi's hopes were turned eastward to Egypt. When the walls of his town had reached their full height, he mounted to the top and fired an arrow towards the west. Soon after his dominion extended to the Atlantic. Then it had to be established on the shores of the Nile. His third successor, Moez-lidîn-Allah, sent a Greek slave, Jauher, to conquer Egypt and build a capital city, which he called "The Victorious" Cairo (El Kahira). Syria soon experienced the fate of Egypt; and even the seat of the Caliphat was for a short time in the hands of the descendant of the Persian oculist, and his name resounded in the *Salvum fac* at Bagdad instead of that of the Abbassides.

The Caliphs of Bagdad made war against their fortunate rivals of Cairo with the pen and with all the weapons of theology, making their sages declare that the pretended descendant of Ali was really the son of a Magus and of a Jewess; but the day when the Egyptian Ulemas received Moez and asked him for proofs of his lineage, he easily convinced them by two arguments. Holding the pommel of his

sword in his hand, he exclaimed: "This is my ancestor!" and throwing them a handful of gold, he said, "Here are my proofs"(43).

Nevertheless, credulity wore itself out in time. The Prophet had not declared that the Mahdi was to become a source of terrestrial kings—he was to have come to announce God. God must come, and so the seventh Fatimide, Hakim, became God. This Hakim was a sort of raving madman, by turns a bigoted Mussulman and a downright atheist, according to the theological caprice of the moment, and according to whether he subscribed to the letter of the Koran or to the symbolical interpretation known only to those initiated in the highest degree. A Persian secretary named Darazî came to preach to him that he was the Divine incarnation, and Hakim believed it without having to be asked to do so twice; but, wonderful to relate, Hakim was not the only person who believed in Hakim; quite a church formed about this God in the flesh, and when he suddenly disappeared, three years after his apotheosis, having probably been assassinated, his followers announced that he would reappear in human form on the day of resurrection to pass his judgments by the sword. He was to appear enveloped as in a veil, with a multitude of angels,

among squadrons of cherubims. His arrival was to be preceded by a great tumult in the land of Egypt, by the apparition of an impostor at Cairo (Arabi Pasha?), by earthquakes (those in Spain?), by the triumph of the Christians, and by the derision into which religion shall have fallen.

"When ye see among you faith become rare," cried one of the apostles, "pious men overwhelmed with injuries and outrages; when religion shall be, against the will of those who have remained faithful to it, a subject for mirth in the mouths of the impure; when it shall be treated as a paring of the nails to be flung far away; when the earth, great as it is, shall seem too small for the disciples of truth, who cannot find in it a place of safety; then may ye speedily, O ye dregs of the nations, expect to hear the cry which will be the signal for your defeat! O ye remnant of the worshippers of the calf and of idols!" (44).

The worship of Hakim did not survive its god in Egypt; but it has lived on to the present day in the mountains of Syria. There Darazî left disciples who assumed his name, and the descendants of whom we now call the Druzes, who still wait the return of Hakim, the Man-god.

The Berbers of Constantine and Tunis had their

Mahdi at the time of the founder of the Fatimides; two centuries later came one to the Berbers of Morocco. A man of the tribe of Masmuda, in the Morocceen Atlas, named Mohammed ibn Tumert, returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca and the schools of Bagdad with a half-pantheistic system which he called the system of Unity, or *almohade* (*almuvahhid*) system. At first he was only a saint (they all begin in this way), so severe and so chaste in his habits that he easily persuaded the Barbers that he belonged to a different species from themselves.

He soon announced the coming of the Mahdi, and it was eagerly expected. Next he affirmed that he himself was the Mahdi, and he was believed Miracles were demanded: he performed them. For example, he made angels speak from the bottom of a well, and pronounce sentence of death against his enemies, who were immediately executed by his followers. Then, without losing time, he had the well filled up to guard its sanctity from possible pollution in the future, and to prevent any indiscretion on the part of his angels.

The Mahdi died before having reaped the fruits of his miracles; his disciple and successor, Abd-al-Mumin, profited by them, and after having inun-

dated Morocco with a torrent of Berbers, passed into Spain, which he also conquered; hence the dynasty of the Almohades under which, during the whole of the twelfth century, Spain was subjected to a wild orthodoxy unknown during the Arab rule. Averroes had to go into exile. "In our country," said a sage of the time with much pride, "not the slightest heresy is tolerated; we will have no church, no synagogue" (45).

The Almohades succumbed in their turn; but the Mahdi fever continued to rage among the Berbers; it was epidemic throughout the thirteenth century. He was sought at the extremities of the habitable world. At Massa, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, there was a celebrated convent or *ribat;* not far from there dwelt the tribe of Guedala, the men of which covered their faces with a veil called the *litham*, which only allowed the eyes to appear, and is still worn by the Tuaregs. The idea arose that it was thence, and from among this veiled people, that the hidden Imâm, the long-expected Mahdi, would come forth, and that in the convent his inauguration would take place (46). More than one aspirant came to the *ribat* to leave it Mahdi and perish immediately (47). It is said that at the present moment there is still one waiting there (48.)

VI.

THE MAHDI IN TURKEY.

After the Persians and the Berbers let us turn to the Turks.

The Turks were not Alides; being the heirs of the Caliphs of Bagdad, they were and still are fanatically orthodox. A passionate hatred raged between the Persian Shiites and the Turkish Sunnites. They also believed that the Mahdi was to appear at the end of time supported by three hundred and sixty heavenly spirits, "The men of God, the *Ridjal Allah*," to summon all the peoples of the earth to the knowledge of Islam; but they took their precautions against him, for they knew very well that they were not of the blood of Mahomet, that they were interlopers in the Caliphat, and had only entered it by main force. Hence they sought to isolate the Mahdi from the world, and cut every bond between him and the human race. The thirty-fourth article of the Turkish creed was that "the

Imâm ought to be visible, that he must not hide from the public gaze, nor be the object of its expectation" (49). In Turkey, therefore, there was no room for a hidden Imâm, an absent Hakim, or an "expected Fatimide." They have declared quite recently, as we shall presently see, that the Mahdi can only appear in a time of interregnum, when the Caliph has died without an acknowledged successor, a very conservative theory and a most reassuring one for the Sultan on the throne. But when people will have a Messiah, not all the sermons of all the theologists in the world will prevent them from manufacturing one (50).

The most celebrated of Turkish Mahdis made his appearance in 1666, under Mohammed IV.—the Sultan who very nearly took Vienna. That year there was a Messianic eruption, which began among the Jews. The Cabala announced the arrival of the Messiah for that year: he appeared at the appointed time. He was a young man from Smyrna, of extreme personal beauty, very eloquent, and inspired, to all seeming, with divine fervor; his name was Sabbatai Zevi. All the Turkish rabbis acknowledged him, and proselytes came to him from Germany, Amsterdam, and London; the kingdom of Israel was about to be re-established, the reign of

God to commence, and the New Jerusalem to descend upon earth.

The Mussulman world also was stirred. The arrival of the Mahdi was to be preceded and announced by that of the Antichrist, of the false prophet Deddjâl; hence as the Jewish Messiah had come the Mahdi would soon appear. An eclipse of the moon, which stopped the troops who were ready to embark for Crête, proved that the time had come, and then it was suddenly announced that the Mahdi had appeared. This was the son of a Kurdistan sheikh who had put himself at the head of some thousands of Kurds; but he was taken and sent to the Sultan. The Sultan was hunting when the Mahdi was presented to him. He questioned him, and the young man, renouncing his part, answered with such good grace that the Sultan was delighted with him and retained him as page.

Some time afterwards Sabbatai being denounced as an impostor by a rabbi whose proffered services as vicar of the Messiah he had refused, had also to be summoned before the Sultan, and, to the great scandal of his followers, was obliged to employ an interpreter in order to answer the questions put to him; emotion had apparently made him lose the supernatural knowledge of all tongues which he

ought to have possessed. Matters became worse when the Sultan had him stripped and bound to a target, and offered himself to become a convert if the arrows shot at him should leave his body scathless. Sabbatai declined the ordeal, accepted the turban,* and obtained a post as one of the warders of the harem. Thus the Sultan had the honor of being served by the Antichrist as doorkeeper, and the Mahdi as valet. In spite of this protection, however, he was strangled by his janissaries a few years later according to Ottoman custom (51).

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* To put on the turban is the sign of conversion to the faith of Islam.—A. S. B.

VII.

THE MAHDI IN EGYPT.

We may pass over the eighteenth century, which was not very fertile in Mahdis. The Mahdi slept in the East just as Christ slept in the West; he awoke in Egypt at the French conquest in May, 1799. It is not likely that this Mahdi belongs to the old Alide movement of Fatimite Egypt, for he was supported by Turkey, which supplied him with English money. This Mahdi, whose real name is unknown, seems to have been one of the most decided impostors of his kind. He came from Tripoli, where he had descended from heaven; his descent, however, was made in the desert, so that the miracle had but few spectators. He was very lavish with his money—money which had also fallen from heaven, but which, curiously enough, was marked with the Sultan's stamp. His body, although visible, was immaterial. Every day at the hour of prayer before the assembled people he dipped his

fingers into a bowl of milk, and passed them across his lips; this was all the nourishment he took. At Damanhour he surprised and slaughtered sixty men belonging to the navy; and by throwing a little dust towards the French guns he prevented the powder from exploding, and caused the balls to fall harmless before the true believers. But Lefebvre, the French Brigadier-General, marched against him with four hundred men. "Assailed by a cloud of Arabs," wrote Bonaparte in a report to the Directory, "he ranged his men in a square, and all day long he continued killing the madmen who threw themselves upon our cannon, unable to rid themselves of the delusion under which they labored. It was not till night that these fanatics, when they counted their dead (there were more than a thousand) and their wounded, began to understand that *God no longer performs miracles*" (52).

When his alarmed and shocked partisans showed him their dead and wounded, the Mahdi replied that only those are invulnerable who have an entire faith. Apparently he himself was not one of these, for in a skirmish a ball which laid him dead marked him out as an unbeliever; but his more faithful followers concluded that he had considered it better to fight from the heights of heaven whence he had

come, and they looked for his return. He did not return, but the French went away, which amounted to very much the same thing, and vindicated the honor of the Mahdi.

VIII.

THE MAHDI IN THE SOUDAN.

We have now reached the Mahdi of Soudan celebrity. The time has not yet come to write his history, for he has first to accomplish and end it. Concerning the man personally we have only two authentic documents. One is the letter of a Frenchman born in the Soudan, who saw him at Khartoum —M. Mousa Peney, son of Dr. Peney, one of the bravest of explorers in the Soudan, the first European who had ever visited Gondokoro. The only fault to find with this is that it sometimes sins on the side of over-precision (53). The other, which dives into the very souls of the heroes of the drama, is the report of a consultation of the Ulemas of El Azhar Mosque at Cairo, of which M. Clermont Ganneau, the well-known Orientalist, has kindly communicated his own translation to the author. The following is derived from these two sources:

The name of the Mahdi is Mohammed Ahmed. He was born at Dongola, about the year of the



The Mahdi.



Hegira 1260, 1843 of our era. His father's name was Abdallahi, and his mother's Amina (54).

These details, of little apparent significance to us, are of the greatest importance to Mussulmans. A tradition, which is really very ancient and attributed to Mahomet, declares that the Mahdi shall bear the same name as the Prophet, and that the father of the Mahdi shall have the same name as the Prophet's father (55). Now, the Prophet's name was Mohammed Ahmed, his father's Abdallah, and, what is more, his mother was called Amina. Forty years is the age of prophecy among the Mussulmans, because it was at that age that Mahomet revealed himself.

The Mahdi's name and those of his parents seem to point to the fact that he was born in the midst of people disposed to fervor and prophecy, an hereditary genius. Moreover, from his childhood, Mohammed showed that he had a decided vocation; at twelve years old he knew the Koran by heart. When his father died, his two elder brothers, who were boat-builders on the White Nile, seeing that he had talent, supplied his wants, and provided him with means to study under two professors of repute in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Abdel Dagim and El Gourachi.

When twenty-five years old, having finished his studies, and his mother being dead, he settled down near the place where his brothers worked, in the Island of Aba, a little island then unknown, but now historical in Europe and sacred in Africa. There he lived in a very retired way for fifteen years, the fifteen years which Mahomet had spent in meditation near Mount Harra. His career was evidently foreshadowed by that of the Prophet. Strauss says that the life of Jesus is a projection cast by the popular imagination from the ancient prophecies of Israel. The life of the Mahdi is a patent illustration of this theory, the Mahdi being but the living reflection of Mahomet.

He lived in a hole in the ground, and grew thin from privations and frequent fasting, continually mourning over the corruption of men. The neighboring tribe of Beggaras, the most powerful in this region of the Nile, venerated him as a saint, and felt assured that the breath of God was upon him; so when the hour of prophecy was told, and the fortieth year began, when he rose up Mahdi, the Beggaras without any difficulty passed from veneration to adoration, and he became that phenomenon —a prophet in his own country.

Moreover, was not the fatal year approaching, the

year 1300 of the Hegira, which a modern tradition assigns for the final triumph of Islam? Mohammed sent out numbers of missionaries to the sheikhs of the various tribes, announcing that he was the long-expected Mahdi, that Mahomet had come from God to tell him that the Turkish dominion was about to end, that the Soudan was to rise on every side, and that he himself, after having passed the necessary time in the Soudan, was to go up to Mecca to be acknowledged by the great Sheriff.

His emissaries had been preaching these things for about a year without anything being known of them at Khartoum, although it was only three days' journey from the sacred island. Raouf Pacha, the Governor-General, when at last he was informed of the true state of affairs, sent two hundred men to Aba to seize the Mahdi. Overtaken by rain and sinking into deep mud at each step, in the depths of the forest, the men, it is said, at last arrived at midnight at the hut of the Prophet, round which a band of dervishes were dancing, repeating the sacred name of Allah.

The adjutant-major fired and killed one of the dervishes, and immediately the whole band howling with rage fell upon the soldiers, their cries being repeated by thousands of Arabs who had established

themselves in the forest. In a few seconds the whole troop, including its officers, was cut to pieces. This was the first spark of the great fire which is now raging in the basin of the Nile. It was in August, 1881.

The Mahdi, retiring with his dervishes to Mount Gadir, commenced new efforts. The Soudan began to be affected. The temporary governor, the Bavarian Giegler Pacha, concentrated the garrisons of Sennaar, Fachoda, and Kordofan, with the view of leading them against the Mahdi, not for a moment imagining that the provinces which he left ungarrisoned by this step would immediately revolt.

Seven thousand men sent to Mount Gadir were attacked by fifty thousand insurgents, commanded by the Mahdi's two brothers, Mohammed and Hamed. The two brothers perished, but of the Egyptian army only one hundred and fifty men escaped.

During this time Sennaar revolted, and El-Obeid fell into the hands of the Mahdi, who made it his capital on the 17th of January, 1883. On the 5th of November, in the same year, the army marching to the rescue under Hicks Pacha was destroyed, or went over to the camp of the Mahdi. We know what followed.

IX.

MOHAMMED AHMED AND HIS RIVALS.

Many explanations of the success of the Mahdi have been sought. Some say he is a genius. Perhaps he is; but that is not in itself sufficient. He really does not seem to be an ordinary man. A deep and sincere conviction is required to act upon the masses as he has done, more especially as he does not rely upon the magic of mystery, but shows himself to all. When his quarters were at El-Obeid, the Irishman O'Kelly remarks (56), he went to the mosque, in the midst of the crowd, his sandals on his feet, and his whole dress consisting of a shirt and drawers made of coarse cloth.*

His strategy is elementary, but it is that which the country requires: no assaults on fortified towns, which are merely to be surrounded until famine opens their gates; no great battles, but a constant

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* See Note 69 and Appendix A.—A. S. B.

harassing of the enemy, surrounding him from a distance, then, when he is exhausted, swooping down on him with all forces united to make an end of the affair.

Whether he follows the advice of European adventurers or acts on his own opinions, the success with which he has met has justified his plan of warfare up till the present. Two facts seem to indicate that he is relatively honest and humane;* he performs few miracles (57), and he makes prisoners (58).

Recent news from the seat of war indicates that he is a cultivated specimen of Mussulman politician. The messengers sent by him to neutral or hostile tribes, to summon them to join him on pain of extermination, are accompanied by Ulemas charged to convince them of the mission of the Mahdi, and of the supreme duty to join him which is incumbent on them. Many who are insensible or re-

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* This latter epithet can however hardly be applied to some of his followers. The special correspondent of *The Lancet* writing from the base-hospital camp near Suakin, under date March 23d, 1885, after describing the character of the wounds inflicted on our soldiers, said: "No man unhorsed in fight ever escapes the fury of these ruffians, nor lives to tell the tale of a hand-to-hand encounter with their active and brave but relentless foes." (See *Lancet*, April 11.)—A. S. B.

bellious to threats come from the theological discussion ready to die the death of martyrs to his cause. The tribal jealousies which counterbalance hatred of Christianity will weigh light in one scale, if in the other they see the authority of the Koran added to the weight of the victorious sword (59).

Others believe him to be a mere tool in the hands of the great slave-merchants of the Upper Nile, who are menaced in their hideous traffic by European civilization. But this is to be too precise in politics; the Mahdi may have the slave-merchants on his side, but the slaves are also for him. The rising of the Mahdi is the natural and legitimate reaction of the Soudan, whether for or against slavery, against the worst of oppressions, that which presents itself with all the hypocrisies of civilization.

Civilization introduced into a half-savage country is a dangerous thing even in the hands of Europeans; we can hardly imagine what it may become in the hands of Egyptian Pachas, Arabs, or Turks, steeped in bureaucracy.

The Egyptian conquest of the Soudan was doubtless beneficial for the West, for our science and commerce; but for the peoples of the Soudan it was hell upon earth. The Egyptian conquest was the monopoly of slavery for the benefit of the Khe-

dive's people. Our hero, Gordon, appointed Governor of the Soudan, saw the intimate workings of Egyptian civilization, and twice he resigned his post in horror and disgust.

Further, the war-cry of the Mahdi is not "Down with the Christians!" but "Down with the Turks!" That is to say, down with the false Moslems of Cairo! The word *Turk* is used habitually in the Soudan, because in the Island of Aba people are not familiar with the changes which take place in the dictionary of politics, and they are ignorant that the Turk of Constantinople no longer rules in Egypt.

However this may be, the Turk, who still thinks himself sovereign, took fright. The Soudan, moreover, is not the only place where a Mahdi is to be dreaded; on the other side of the Red Sea there is another volcano—Arabia. The Arabs of Arabia have certainly been cold to him hitherto; but the reason of this may easily be conceived; for if there *is* a place which has a right to claim the honor of giving the Mahdi to the world, it is Mecca, and each Sheriff who prides himself on being descended from Fatima says in his heart of hearts, "Who knows? Perhaps I may be the man!"

During the pilgrimage of 1882, a Mahdi was ex-

pected at Mecca. The Turkish police was on its guard, and informed the notables of the city that something unpleasant might happen to them if he did appear, and the Messiah remained discreetly in the background.

Nevertheless, a curious fact proves to what an extent the atmosphere of Arabia, without distinction of religion or race, is impregnated with Mesianic vapors. A hundred Jewish families of Yemen, after traversing the whole of that immense peninsula, arrived at Jerusalem a few months ago, having been urged thither by the report that the Messiah had appeared! They found at Sion, instead of the Messiah, the Turk, misery, and famine. They lodged in caverns at the foot of the holy mountain, and set up their tents on the ground at the feet of its olive-trees. The European consuls interceded for them, and had some houses built for them on the Mount of Offence * (60).

If we remember that, in Mussulman theology, the Messiah heralds the Mahdi, this Jewish exodus is full of significance as to the ideas current in Arabia

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* The Mount of Offence or Scandal is the most southern part of the Mount of Olives, which has been fixed upon as the place where Solomon raised altars for his idolatrous wives.—S. A. B.

at the present time. Hence the Mahdi, aware of these things, is anxious to visit Mecca, and this is the reason for his having announced, as the last act of his programme, that he proposes to go thither to be acknowledged by the great Sheriff. This is why Osman Digna (61) is so desirous of retaining Suakin; unfortunately for him, the English fleet bars the way to the holy city. It is the sea, this time, which says to the man, "*Non amplius ibis.*"

Another Mahdi who was an important personage until the great victories of Mohammed, but whose star has since been on the wane, is the Mahdi of the Senussis. This sect was founded hardly more than forty years ago by an Algerian of Mostaganem, and is dominant at the present time in Tripoli and the Tripolitan Soudan, extending its branches even to the Atlantic, to Bagdad (62).

Senussi, a man of considerable foresight, had married a Sheriffa, that is to say, a woman of the race of Ali, and had given his son the name of El-Mahdi. On this son the eyes of all the Senussis were fixed. He had attained the age of forty—the prophetic age. It is said among the Arabs that the Sultan, who felt a little uncomfortable, wrote to him, saying, "There is a great deal of talk about thee. Who art thou? If thou art the Mahdi, let us know, so

that in the name of God we may aid thee to accomplish the divine mission which has been confided to thee." The Mahdi prudently replied, "I am your servant; but I do not know what you mean." In the mean while the Mahdi of Tripoli and the Mahdi of the Soudan sat looking at each other, like two china dogs on a farm-house mantelpiece. At the beginning of last year the Mahdi of Jahrboub denounced him of the Soudan, to the indignation of the faithful, as an impostor and a liar.

During this time the true Mahdi revealed himself, as a Mahdi ought to do, by victory. The Sultan, growing more and more uneasy, made a trial of those theological weapons which nine centuries ago had brought such poor success to his predecessors of Bagdad against the Fatimide Mahdi. He consulted the Ulemas of El-Azhar, the greatest university of the Mussulman world, as to the value of the pretensions of this "person who has revolted against the authority of the Caliph of God on earth, who alone has power to bind and to release." The letter in which the Sultan consulted them gave the *résumé* of a circular letter sent by the Mahdi to the tribes of Suakin, the commentary on which were the battles between General Graham and Osman Digna.

After the usual benedictions on the name of Allah, on Mahomet and his family, and after numerous quotations from the Koran, and traditions which command a holy war and forbid the faithful to make friends with the enemies of the Most High, he claimed for himself the Supreme Caliphat, a claim which, he said, was supported by a revelation from the Most High. Mahomet came to inform him that he was the long-expected Mahdi, and made him sit on his throne in the presence of the Caliphs, the spiritual chiefs, and Khidr (the Mahometan representative of the Jewish and Christian prophet Elijah). God then promised him the assistance of the angels who surrounded him, of the faithful Djinns, and of all the prophets and saints who have ever existed, from the time of Adam to the present moment. At the hour of battle the Lord promised him to appear in person with them at the head of his army; the Lord gave him the sword of victory, with the formal promise that none should vanquish him, even if the Djinns should unite with men against him. Besides this, God gave him two other signs of his mission—one a beauty-spot on the right cheek (63), the other *the standard of light*, to be borne at the hour of battle by the Angel Azrael (64). The Prophet said to

him also, "Of the light of my heart art thou created" (65). Whoever believes in him will be very happy, and have allotted to him a place near God like that of Abd-el-Kader Ghilani (66); whoever opposes him shall be considered an infidel, an outcast in this world and the next, and shall see his children and his fortune a prey to the Moslem. The Prophet concluded by announcing the fall of those infidels, and worse than infidels, the Turks, because they strive to extinguish the light of the Most High God.

The Ulemas gave the reply which was evidently desired, and endeavored to crush the pretensions of the Mahdi with an overpowering weight of arguments and quotations; but, curiously enough, they seemed not to dream of doubting the miracles which he announced as facts. They accepted all his premises, only contesting his conclusions—a very dangerous procedure from a logical point of view. In their honor be it said, however, that the authority of the beauty-spot did not really impose upon them, for they profoundly remarked that there are many people who bear this ornament quite modestly on their cheeks without holding it forth as a reason for them to a claim a mission from on high. The standard of light borne by

Azrael seemed to puzzle them more, and the natural question arises what that standard of light is. Of this we know nothing, but the Ulemas were apparently familiar with its nature. They contented themselves with the observation that a man through whose means a miracle is performed is not necessarily a prophet, and that miracles may even take place through the agency of the impious: for example, apparently, those daily wonders of the unfaithful, railways, the telegraph, dynamite, etc. They argued for a long time as to whether Mahomet had appeared to him awake or asleep, but concluded that however that may have been, he had certainly not brought him a revelation which was contrary to the very law of Mahomet; for the true Mahdi, according to the orthodox tradition, ought to appear at a time of trouble, at the death of a Caliph, when the people should not know whom to appoint in his stead, which was not the case at that moment. Further, he was not to appear in the Soudan, but in Arabia; not to proclaim himself Mahdi, but to be proclaimed Mahdi in spite of himself: for, according to the most authentic traditions, the Mahdi was to be a man from Medina, who, reversing the *Hegira** of Ma-

* The Flight.—A. S. B.

homet, should flee to Mecca and be proclaimed in spite of himself between the black stone at the Caaba, and the standing-place of Abraham (67).

This tradition, which was most reassuring to the powers that were, according to the Ulemas refuted the pretensions of the false prophet, "with a clearness comparable to that of the stars."

The terrible accusation of infidelity, hurled against those who should deny the Mahdi, should be turned against him himself, for he denounced and massacred the faithful, forgetting that it is a less heinous crime to leave a thousand infidels alive than to slay one of the faithful, "an unheard-of and revolting atrocity which angers God and His Prophet, and realizes the hopes of Satan." The words of the Prophet on the subject of heretics apply to the false Mahdi and his followers: "They are the worst of my people who slay the best of my people." Hence, any one who associates with him by act or word will be associated with him at the Last Judgment. The Prophet has said, "Discord sleeps; may God curse him who awakens her!"

A month after this consultation Hicks Pacha's army was exterminated, and many of those who had agreed with the above conclusion began to have doubts of the value of their arguments. The events

which followed later, the taking of Khartoum and the death of Gordon, ended many a doubt and much resistance. The death of Gordon was even more striking than the taking of Khartoum, for it was an event predicted in the Messianic programme.

It seems as if Gordon played, and still plays, a superhuman part in the imagination of the Mahdi's followers. To us Gordon is only a hero, perhaps the last hero of Puritan Christianity, one of Milton's heroes who has lost his way among the intrigues of the nineteenth century; to the Arabs Gordon is Christianity itself, the mighty incarnation of evil and of error, which they contemplate with a mixture of terror, awe, and hatred.

The English papers published a manifesto from the Emir of Berber, announcing the taking of Khartoum and the death of Gordon; according to the translation it said: "We have killed the traitor Gordon" (68). It is rather surprising to find the expression *traitor* coupled with the name of Gordon even by the pen of an Arab, and it is to be regretted that the word so translated was not given in the Arabic original, for very possibly the text gave "Gordon the Impostor," that is to say, the Deddjâl, the Antichrist: for the death of the Deddjâl, the destruction of the Antichrist, was to be the

great work of the Mahdi and the beginning of the great triumph (69). Gordon might have played another part if he had become a convert to Islamism, as the Mahdi seems to have offered that he should do—the part of Jesus Christ Himself; for theoretically at least there can be no Mahdi without a Jesus at his side. No one has hitherto been engaged for this part, but possibly the ambition of M. Ollivier Pain* may be tempted by it.

The movement in the Soudan cannot be crushed by intermittent victories bought too dearly for England. It is not with one battle that a revolution can be put an end to. Islam has reached its '93, and cannot be brought back again to '89. In spite of an infinite number of external differences, the same spirit is now urging the followers of the Mahdi which urged on the men of the French Revolution. To the thousands of people who are ready to die at his slightest command, and probably even to himself, the work of the Mahdi is to bring about the advent of justice upon earth. Remember the Prophet's definition of the Mahdi: "A man who shall fill the earth with justice, as it is now filled with iniquity."

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* See p. 78, foot-note.

The revolutionary idea among the French, and the idea of the Messiah among the Mussulmans, spring from the same instinct, the same aspiration —among the former in a secular, among the latter in a religious form; among the former withered into abstract propositions and theoretical reasonings, among the latter in the spontaneous and striking form of supernatural visions.

On both sides we find the same striving for an ideal, tainted by lapses into greed and hatred; on both sides the same ignorance of reality, the same hopes contrary to the order of Nature, the same dream of a world regenerated by a miracle, without any change in humanity, the same prodigies of enthusiasm, ferocity, and devotion; on both sides, the kingdom of equity, peace, and brotherhood, is to be established by means of a destroying angel. The Chancellor of the Mahdi, if he has one,* need not feel himself expatriated in the midst of the desert confederations. Where the French beggar sings:

> "Here is the end of your troubles,
> Eaters of black bread and drinkers of water!"†

* M. Ollivier Pain is said to be the Mahdi's Chancellor; he played a leading part in the Commune at Paris in 1871.—A. S. B.

† "Voici la fin de vos misères,
Mangeurs de pain noir, buveurs d'eau!"
A song by Dupont which was very popular in 1848.—A. S. B.

the oppressed Arab cries up to heaven: *Mata yathar el Mahdi?*—"When will the Mahdi come?"

A people imbued with these sentiments may be exterminated, but they will never be made to submit to fate.

X.

CONCLUSION.

How will it end? The subject naturally invites prophecies, but the author has no intention of setting himself up as a Mahdi, and will therefore endeavor to be prudent in his predictions.

The present Mahdi, if Mahomet is to be trusted, has still three or four years to last, for the Prophet announced that the terrestrial mission of the Mahdi should last for seven years (70). It is quite possible, indeed, that three years may wear him out: for a Mahdi can only exist by victories and marches in advance; if he retires or pauses the Soudan will cry: "This is not the true Mahdi; he is one of the false Mahdis who are to announce the true: let us wait." It seems safe, however, to assume that whatever may be the result of the English expedition, no European nation, whatever it may be, will ever be able to establish lasting order in the Soudan, and this for a natural reason, a decree from above.

The sun over their heads, the desert sand beneath their feet, oppose a double barrier to their success which no act of Parliament can abolish (71).

From the very dawn of history there has never but twice been anything like real order prevailing in these regions—three thousand years ago under the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and in this century under the Khedives.

Order, as understood by the Khedives, has brought about what we have already seen. England could only restore it with the forces of Egypt; but by reducing Egypt to vassalage, and making the Khedive a mere phantom, by drawing down on herself, by a series of useless and unnecessary measures, the hostility of the most important part of Egypt, she broke with her own hands the only instrument which she could serviceably employ there. Her brave little army with terrible sacrifices and loss of blood might be able to fly the flag of England for a day from the walls of Khartoum, to gain a brilliant but sterile victory in the desert; but her victorious footprints would in a night be obliterated by the sand of the desert.

Hence the real sympathy, more general than is imagined, and which the newspapers will not acknowledge, that the Mahdi excites in England, even

after the death of Gordon. England has a great political virtue—the greatest perhaps of all political virtues—the respect for power under whatever form it may be manifested, as long as it is manifested clearly. If Mohammed Ali had been a politician, if there had been in him the stuff to make a Fatimide or an Almohade, if he consented to remain on earth, and found a great Soudanese empire, then Europe might wake up one fine day and learn that England had sent a resident to the Court of Khartoum or El-Obeid, with a regular treaty of commerce. Unfortunately it seems that the Mahdi is not a politician in the European sense of the word. He is something more, or less—he is an honest fanatic. The kingdom of earth is to him only a stepping-stone to the kingdom of heaven; and in the kingdom of heaven, according to the Arabian conception of it, there is no room for an English resident, even though he were a missionary or a Methodist.

Nevertheless it is necessary that the Soudan shall remain open; if it were closed it would, in the eyes of history, be a disgrace to our times. It is impossible that Europe should lose the fruit of the heroism and genius of an incomparable army of explorers, English, French, Italian, and German. In one

day the loss of half a century of gain would be brought about.

Well! if European civilization cannot ascend the Nile, it has only to reach the source of it and to descend it. This is quite possible. At the very gates of the Soudan a half-European power has slumbered for centuries, a power which has hitherto only occasionally appeared upon the scene to inflict a few short but sanguinary lessons upon Egyptian greed, but which one day will be the *Deus ex machina*—this power is Abyssinia. At the source of the Blue Nile, cut off in a chaos of impregnable mountains, dwells a nation of strong passions, which is at the same time very old and very young, which has behind it long distant memories of power and glory, and which is beginning to dream of a future equal to its real or imaginary past. This people is Christian, and boasts its descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (72). More than thirteen centuries ago it received from the Greeks the Christian religion and the germs of a civilization resembling our own, which only need to be developed if Europe will lend its aid. M. Gabriel Charmes, one of the most brilliant of French journalists, has pointed out the great interest which we should take to merit the friendship of a people who look towards

us, a lost sentinel of the West, whom we have forgotten, for centuries, to relieve. One day if we wish, and will undertake the education of this infant people, the mountains of Abyssinia will be the stronghold whence European civilization shall dominate the Soudan.

This is not an affair of conquest nor of annexation ; it will not be necessary to lead an Abyssinian army to the conquest of Khartoum ; it is a matter of slow and disinterested action which cannot awaken jealousy, for all the nations of Europe can participate in it to the extent in which each inspires confidence. The European nation which shall do the most for the education of this people, which shall respect its weakness instead of speculating upon it, which shall develop its powers instead of using them as an instrument of personal ambition, shall make of this nation, now backward in civilization, an advanced guard against barbarism. Our civilization thus installed at the sources of the Blue Nile will slowly descend the valley ; and who knows whether in these young and courageous hands it may not, when necessary, find a supreme resource against the dangers of a return to barbarism to which it is exposed by the senile quarrels of Europe fallen into its second childhood ?

NOTES.



NOTES.

1. For the subject of Zohâk, see *Ormazd et Ahriman*, by J. Darmesteter. Paris, Vieweg, 1877, §§ 91–95, 107–110.

2. As to Saoshyant, see ibid. §§ 180–192.

3. The word *imâm* literally means the chief, or guide. In public prayer it signifies the officiating minister, whose words the people repeat in a low voice and whose gestures they imitate; he is a delegate of the supreme Imâm, the successor of Mahomet. Among the Shiites, the legitimate imâm having disappeared (see above, p. 40), there are only leaders *de facto*, and the Friday public prayer is no longer legal (Querry, *Recueil de lois Chyites*, I. 85).

4. "In all times the Mussulmans have held the opinion that towards the end of time a man of the family of the Prophet must necessarily appear in order to support religion and bring about the triumph of justice. Leading in his train the true believers, he will make himself master of the Moslem kingdoms, and will be called El Mahdi (the God-

guided). Then El Deddjâl (the Antichrist) will appear, and those events will take place which are to herald the approach of the last hour (of the world), events indicated in the collections of authentic traditions. After the coming of Deddjâl Jesus will descend (from heaven) and will destroy him, or (according to another tradition) he will descend with the Mahdi to assist in the destruction of Deddjâl, and when he prays the Mahdi will be his imâm (prayer-leader)" (*Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldoun*, translated into French by De Slane, II. 158). See the whole chapter, which contains a collection of traditions relative to the Mahdi. Ibn Khaldoun wrote in the fourteenth century; he was born in Tunis in 1332, and died in Egypt in 1406.

5. *Prolégomènes*, II. 166.

6. Masoudi, *Les prairies d'or*, II. 162.

7. *Bagî Minocitrî min yaztân* (Pehlevi Inscriptions, *passim*).

8. "Rex regum Sapor, particeps siderum, frater solis et lunæ, Constantio Cæsari, fratri meo, salutem plurimam dico" (Ammianus Marcellin. XVII. 5–3).

Χοσρόης βασιλεὺς βαριλέων, ...ἐν θεοῖς μὲν ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθὸς καὶ αἰώνιος, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις θεὸς ἐπιφανέστατος, ὑπερένδοξος, νικητής, ἡλίῳ συνανατέλλων καὶ τῇ νυκτὶ χαριζόμενος ὄμματα" (Theophylactus Simocatta, IV. 8).

9. Adrien de Longpérier, *Œuvres*, I. 79. Hence, doubtless, the usage among the Sufis of the word

qotb, pole, to indicate the supreme saint, the delegate of God, by virtue of whom in every generation nature and the world follow regular order. (Silvestre de Sacy, *Journal des Savants,* 1822, p. 17.)

10. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia,* I. 107.

11. The first apotheosis of Ali is attributed to a converted Jew from Yemen, Abdallah ben Saba, founder of the sects of *Extravagants* or *Ultra-Alides* (the Ghâliyas); with regard to these sects see Schahrastâni, *Sects and Schools,* Haarbrückner's translation. (Abul-Fath Muhammad asch-Schahrastâni's *Religionspartheien und Philosphen-Schulen,* Halle, 2 vol. 1850: I. 195–219.)

12. Comte de Gobineau, *Religions de l'Asie centrale;* page 339, *et seq.*—Chodzko, *Théâtre persan* 1878.

13. *Prolégomènes,* II. 178.

14. For the doctrines of *Mokhtar* and the *Mokhtariya,* see *Schahrastâni, loc. cit.,* I. 166–169; on the life of Mokhtar, see the *Chronique de Tabari,* translated into French by M. Zotenberg, IV. 80, *et seq.*

15. *Ormazd et Ahriman,* pp. 212, 217.

16. Simrock, *Handbuch der Deutschen Mythologie,* preface of the 4th edition.

17. *Ormazd et Ahriman,* §§ 175–179.

18. Verses by the poet Kutair:

"In truth the imams of Koreish, the masters of truth, are four in number equal among themselves;

Ali and three of his children, grandsons (of the Prophet by their mother, *Sibt*), on whom rests no doubt;
A grandson, the heir of his faith and of his generosity (Hassan), another buried in the grave at Kerbela (Hussein).
A third hidden from the sight of all until the day when he shall appear at the head of his horsemen, preceded by the standard (Mohammed).
This son conceals himself from all eyes for a long time, hidden in the valley of Radwa, where water and honey flow."
(Masoudi, *Les prairies d'or*, translated by Barbier de Meynard, V. 182; Cf. *Schahrastâni, loc. cit.*, I. 168.)

"The valley of Radwa is situated at the foot of a mountain of the same name, near Yanbo, between that town and Medina. The mysterious aspect of this valley, with its caves and wooded gorges, lends itself to the legend of the *hidden imâm.*" (Barbier de Meynard, *Le Seid himyarite, Journal Asiatique*, 1874, II. 249, note.)

19. *Prolégomènes*, II. 180.

20. On the life and works of this poet, see M. Barbier de Meynard's monograph, in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1874, II. 159, *et seq.*

21. The name of the mother of Mohammed, who belonged to the Hanefite tribe.

22. *Prairies d'or*, V. 182. The last verses composed by Seid, when dying, are in honor of the Hanefite Mahdi:

"Dost thou not know, yet the news is spreading; dost thou not know the words which Mahomet addressed
To the depositary of his knowledge, to the guide to salvation, Ali, when Khawlah was handmaid in his house?

Know (said the Prophet) that Khawlah will soon give thee a son, a generous, brave, and noble hero;
He shall be glorified by the name and surname which I have given him, and he shall be Mahdi after me;
He shall live long, unknown to men, and they shall believe him to be hidden in the tomb at Tibah.
Months and years shall roll away and he shall be seen in the valley of Radwa, in the midst of panthers and lions.
Around him, white gazelles, bulls, and young ostriches shall wander in the midst of lions.
Wild beasts shall spare them, and shall not seek to tear them with their claws;
Death will respect their host, and the animals will feed tranquilly amid pastures and flowers.
I hope that my last hour will be delayed, and that I shall await thy reign free from violence, and which none will accuse as harsh.
Thou shalt triumph over those who persecute us because of You, who are the best of refuges.
Thou shalt place us above them wherever they shall be, in the depths of Tehamah and on the plains of Nedjd,
When coming from the holy land thou shalt show thyself to the sons of Maad, assembled at Medina."

[Compare the above verses with Isaiah xi. 4, *et seq*.; lxv. 25.—A. S. B.]

23. *Prairies d'or*, V. 471.

24. *Prolégomènes*, De Slane, I. 406.

25. Jelâl-nddin as-Suyûti, *History of the Caliphs*, Jarret's translation, Calcutta, 1881, p. 13, *et seq.*

26. Dozy, *Essai sur l'histoire de l'Islamisme*, p. 240.

27. Schefer, *Chrestomathie persane*, p. 170, *et seq.* Sinbad's real object was to restore the ancient reli-

gion of Persia. When he spoke privately to the Ghebers [the fire-worshippers] he said, "The reign of the Arabs has come to an end as one of the Sassanide books predicted. I will not renounce my enterprise until I have destroyed the Kaabah, the worship of which has been substituted for that of the sun, and until we shall as of old make that planet our qiblah." To explain to the Ghebers why in the mean while they had fought under the Mussulman flag, he said, "Mazdek became a Shiy and enjoined on us to avenge the blood of Abu-Muslim" (ibid. p. 172).

28. The hero of Moore's poem, "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan."

29. On *El-Mocanna*, see Gustav Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, II. 101, *et seq.*

30. *Tabari*, IV. 371, *et seq.*

31. *Tabari*, IV. 382–421.

32. The following is one of the apocryphal traditions circulated at the time in order to bring about the restoration of the Alides, which was attributed to a contemporary of Ali, Ibn Masud:

"While we were near the Prophet, said Abdallah Ibn Masud, behold some young men of the family of Hachem approached. When the Prophet saw them his eyes filled with tears and he changed color. I said to him, 'For a long time we have noticed something in your face which has pained us.' He replied, 'God has preferred to give to us who belong to a specially favored house, happiness in another world rather than prosperity in this. After me the

members of this family shall suffer misfortunes; they shall be persecuted until men shall come out of the east bearing with them black flags. They will demand what is right, but they will not obtain it; then they will fight, will be victorious, and will gain what they had demanded. They will only accept it in order to give it to a man of my family who shall fill the earth with justice as now it is filled with iniquity. Those among you who shall see this must join them even if in order to do so they have to drag themselves through snow.' It was Yezîd Ibn Abi Ziad who brought this message which is generally known by the traditionists under the name of *tradition of the flags*" (*Prolégomènes*, II. 176). The men from the east were the army of Abu-Muslim come from Khorassan; the black flag was the banner of the Abbassides.

33. Since the reign of Schah Abbah, who organized the pilgrimage to Mechhed, in order to retain in Persia the caravans and the money which had gone out every year to Mecca. The word Mechhed means "place of martyrdom," and by extension, "tomb of a saint."

34. As to the fate of the twelve Imâms, see Reinaud, *Description des Monuments Musulmans du Cabinet Blacas*, 1828, Vol. I. 367–377; Schefer, *Chrestomathie persane*, 184–189.

35. Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau de l'empire Ottoman*, ed. in fol. I. 88. This picture is reproduced as the frontispiece to the present volume.

36. Barbier de Meynard, Yaqout, *Dictionnaire de la Perse*, p. 435.

37. *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah* (fourteenth century), translation into French by Defrémery and Sanguinetti, II. 97–99. *Prolégomènes*, I. 404.

38. Reinaud, *loc. cit.*, I. 377; II. 161.

39. Chardin, *Voyage en Perse*, ed. Langlès, VII. 456; IX. 144. The last of the Sarbedarian princes (a dynasty of Khorassan, end of the fourteenth century), Khodja ali Mouied, acted in the same manner. (D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, art. *Sarbedariens.*)

40. The schism began as early as the sixth Imâm, Jafar. Jafar had appointed his eldest son, Ismael, as his successor; but Ismael having died before him, he transmitted his rights to his second son, Musa, although Ismael had left children. The mass of the Alides accepted Musa, but a powerful party refused to acknowledge him, and remained faithful to Ismael and his descendants. "Some partisans of Ismael refused to believe in his death; he had simply disappeared, they said, and would return some day, even if it was at the end of time. Strange reports circulated about him; some persons claimed to have seen him at Basrah. All those of the Ismaelites who put faith in these propositions declared that they must wait for the return of Ismael, and as he did not return they concluded that he was the expected Messiah, the Mahdi, and that no Imâm was to come after him. They received the name of Stationary Ismaelites; but

the greater number of people proclaimed Ismael's son, Mohammel ben Ismael" (Stanislas Guyard, *Un grand maître des Assassins, Journal Asiatique*, 1877, I. 329).

41. On the life and work of Abdallah ben Meimun, see Stanislas Guyard, *loc. cit.*, 326–334.

42. A tradition attributed to Mahomet prevailed in Africa that at the end of the world the sun would rise from the West, which was interpreted by saying that the Mahdi would appear in the West, *Maghreb* = setting of the sun; but this did not prevent the existence at the same time of a literal interpretation. On the Fatimide Mahdi, see Ibn Khaldoun, *Histoire des Berbers*, De Slane's French translation, III. 496; *Prolégomènes*, III. 40, *et seq.*, 128; Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia;* Silvestre de Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des Druzes*, I. cclxv.

43. Vie du Khalife fatimide Moez-lidîn-Allah, par Quatremère (*Journal Asiatique*).

44. Silvestre de Sacy, *loc. cit.*, I. 229.

45. On the Almohade Mahdi, see Dozy, *Essai sur l'histoire de l'Islamisme*,, pp. 368–380 ; Ibn Khaldoun, *Histoire des Berbers*, De Slane, III. 161, *et seq.; Prolégomènes*, I. 53, *et seq.*, 467; II. 442; *le Kartas.*

46. "As a rule they expected to see him appear in some distant province, in some locality situated at the extreme limit of the habitable land, such as Zab in Ifrikiya,* or at Sous in the Maghreb.† They

* In Algeria to the south of Auras.

† On the Atlantic, at the mouth of the river Sous.

went there intending to remain until they met this person, imagining that he would appear in the *ribat* and be inaugurated there. They chose this place because it was in the neighborhood of the country of the Guedalas, one of the veiled peoples, and they thought that it was to this race that he would belong. These suppositions are not justified in any way except by the extraordinary appearance of the (veiled) people. . . . Many individuals of limited intelligence went to the *ribat* with the intention of deceiving people, and posing as founders of a new doctrine, an enticing prospect for the ambitious, when they yield to the inspiration of the demon or of their own madness. But these attempts often cost them their lives" (*Prolégomènes*, II. 200).

47. At the beginning of the eighth century of the Hegira, under the Merinide Yussuf Ibn Yacub, a Sufi named *Touizeri*, the little Touzerian (from Touzer, Tunisian Djerid), appeared at the *ribat* of Massa, bringing a number of men from Sous, Guezoulas, and Zanagas (Sanhejas), and was assassinated by the alarmed Masmudian Emirs.

El-Abbas appeared among the Ghomaras of the Marocco Rif between 690 and 700 (1291–1300 A.D.), took Bades (Velez de Gomera), burnt the bazaars, marched on El-Mezemma (Alhucema) and was assassinated.

Mohammed Ibn Abrahim el-Abbeli, the master of Ibn Khaldoun, making the pilgrimage to the *ribat* of El-Obbad (the burial-place of the Zauia of the

Sheikh Bu Medin), on the mountain above Tlemcen, travelled with a descendant of the Prophet coming from Kerbela, where he had dwelt, accompanied by a numerous and admiring party, and who was received everywhere by hospitable compatriots. He came to establish the authority of the Fatimides in Maghreb; but seeing the forces of the Merinide Yussuf Ibn Yacub, he prudently retired, saying: "We have made a false step; the time has not yet come" (*Prolégomènes*, II. 202).

48. In 1828 a Mahdi appeared in Senegal, Mohammed ben A'mar ben Ahhmed; like Mahomet he revealed himself in the month of Ramadan; he was shut up as insane in a cell built for the purpose according to the custom of the country; he left it twelve days later at the time of evening prayer, took up his parable in the manner of a prophet, and made known his mission. Beaten by the Almamy (the Emir Al-Mumenin of those parts), he brought back his scattered partisans by offering a sacrifice for the sins of the people; the sacrifice was his own infant son. It is not known what became of him. The contemporary evidence goes no further than that event (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1829, I. 247).

49. Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau de l'empire Ottoman*, in fol. I. 88. This is the Sunnite Code of Omar Nessefy (born in the year 534 of the Hegira, 1142 of our era), with a commentary by Saad-eddin Teftazani (808 of the Hegira, 1405 of our era).

50. Mouradgea d'Ohsson mentions several Mahdis

under the Sultans, most of them were Dervishes: Jelal under Selim I., Yahya Mohammed Seyyah under Murad III., Ahmed Scheykh Sacariah, under Murad IV. Unfortunately he gives no details respecting these Mahdis; but he says, "It is believed that there is even at present (1788) an impostor of this name on the frontiers of Persia."

51. Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'empire Ottoman*, Hellert's translation, XI. 239, *et seq.* Cf. Reinach, *Histoire des Israelites*, 269, *et seq.* Another Mahdi appeared under Ahmed II. in 1694; he declared himself in the mosque at Adrianople. Summoned to appear before the Kaimakan, he escaped by feigning madness; when at liberty he began afresh, and was exiled to Lemnos (Hammer-Purgstall, *loc. cit.* XII. 360).

52. Report dated Messidor 1st, Eighth Year (June 19, 1799).

53. *Société de Géographie* reports for 1883, pp. 621–628. The number of rebels engaged is sometimes given to a man.

54. He is of middle height, coffee-colored complexion, with a black beard according to Mousa Peney (*Revue d'Ethnographie*, II. 473. Letter dated April 13, 1883). On each cheek he has three parallel scars, which M. Goeje says, in a letter to the author, are the marks of those gashes which in Africa are called *Meshâli* (Welsted, *Travels in Arabia*, II. 206, 283) and *Tashrît* at Mecca (Robertson Smith, *Encyc. Brit.* art. "Mecca"), a disfigurement which it is fashion-

able to perform on children—according to some, for the purpose of preventing ophthalmia; according to others, as a sign of piety. He also bears the seal of prophecy, see pp. 81–2, note 63.

55. "Even though the world should have but one day more to live, it is certain that God will prolong that day until He has revived a man like me, or a member of my family, whose name shall be the same as mine, and whose father shall bear the same name as my father" (*Prolégomènes*, II. 162). This tradition probably dates from the time of the Mahdi Mohammed, who was the son of a man named Abdallah, the rival of Almansor.

56. *Bosphore Egyptien*, June 8, 1884.

57. "It is very remarkable," says the eminent Leyden Orientalist, M. de Goeje, "and a proof of sincerity that the present Mahdi does not set himself up as of Fatimide descent" (in a private letter dated March 13, 1885). Cf. note 65.

58. See the account, given by the Greek prisoners, cited in note 69.

59. The following circular or general order from the Mahdi was picked up after the battle of Kirbekan on February 9 1885, and although not written by him it breathes his sentiments and shows the practical energy and faith of the writers: "In the name of the most Merciful, Bountiful, etc., etc., etc. To the Sheikhs of Dar Monister, Dar Robatat, etc., etc. Twenty-five rifles have been distributed to every village in your country, and in all the Shagyeh districts,

No man therefore must come unto you without arms. Should any join your camp without carrying a rifle, he is to receive two hundred strokes of the kerbash. Unarmed men are useless, and only eat up provisions; besides they may be suspected of being lukewarm in our cause and of being afraid of being seen by the Giaour, or the Turks, who are not true Mussulmans, and more to be cursed than the Giaour. All of these ye shall destroy in due time. After much blood has flown there shall be peace. See that these instructions of our Lord, the Long Expected One,* are followed. Woe to all the disobedient." Then follow signatures of four dervishes.

"MAHOMET ALI,
IBRAHIM-ERAN-HASSEIN,
HANID AGEIL,
SOLEUMANN YOUSSEFF."

(*Daily News*, March 10, 1885; the letter is published in the correspondence from the battle-field, dated February 11th).

60. *Univers Israélite*, 1885, February 16th.

61. According to an interesting article published in the *Daily News* for March 21, 1885, Osman Digna, the most able of the Mahdi's lieutenants, is the

* Probably *El-Muntazar*, the ancient title of the Mahdi, or last Imâm. [For particulars of a coin struck in the name of El-Muntazar, and issued by the Vizier Abu-Ali in the year of the Hegira 524 (1130 A.D.), see *Catalogue of the Coins in the British Museum*, by Stanley Lane-Poole, Introduction, pp. ix. *et seq.*—A. S. B.]

grandson of a Turkish slave-merchant established at Suakin in the beginning of this century; on the mother's side he belonged to the non-Arab tribe of the Hadendowas. The house of Osman Digna was the richest and most influential in the country of Suakin. In the course of his business travels in the Soudan, where he went in search of profitable exchanges, negroes included, he allied himself with the principal heads of the anti-Egyptian movement which was hatching. Ruined by the Anglo-Egyptian Convention against slavery, he assembled the sheikhs under the sycamore which shadows the chief well of Suakin, and exhorted them to rise against the Turks (the Egyptians), those false Mussulmans who entered into alliance with the Christians. The sheikhs thought he was mad. He waited, and recommenced his travels. When the Mahdi declared himself he became one of his first followers, and went to seek him at El-Obeid, receiving the title of "Emir of the Dervish of God," with letters to the Soudanese sheikhs ordering them to obey him. Since then he has bravely held his own against the English, often vanquished, but regaining his positions, and always ready to be on the offensive. At last his star seems to have sunk before General Graham towards the end of March. His camp at Tamai was taken in the beginning of April; it had already been taken last year without any great benefit to the English.*

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*It was reported on April 17, 1885, that the enemy was again at Tamai.—A. S. B.

62. Henri Duveyrier, *La confrérie musulmane de Sidi Mohammed ben'Ali Es-Senousi et son domaine géographique en l'année* 1300 *de l'hégire*, Paris, Société de Géographie, 1884.

63. It is said that Mahomet bore between his shoulders the seal of prophecy. "The Mussulmans believe that it is a kind of wen covered with hair, and as large as a pigeon's egg. They add that all the prophets had one like it, but that at the death of Mahomet the seal of prophecy disappeared forever. Mahomet made this natural deformity one of the chief proofs of his divine mission" (Reinaud, *Description du Cabinet Blacas*, II. 79).

64. The angel of death.

65. An ingenious way of acknowledging that he is not of Mahomet's blood. Cf. note 57.

66. This was a great sage of the seventh century, who has become the chief saint of contemporary Africa; he is supposed to return to earth once every year at night, and to traverse the desert beneath the rays of the moon on a magnificently caparisoned horse. On the Qaderis, the brotherhood of his followers, to which the Mahdi seems to belong, see Commandant Rinn's book, *Marabout et Khouans*, Algiers, 1884, p. 173, *et seq.*

67. Between the *Rokn* and the *Makâm*. The *Rokn* is the famous black stone brought from heaven by the angel Gabriel, imbedded in the north-east angle of the wall whence the pilgrims start for the seven sacred turns round the temple. It is said that

it was at first of a brilliant red and wonderfully transparent; but that it has grown black under the kisses of generations of sinners. The Makâm or *Makâm Ibrahim* is the place where Abraham stood during the construction of the Caaba.

68. "The traitor Gordon" (*Daily News*, February 14, 1883).

69. This supposition is confirmed by a communication published in the *Standard* for March 4th, which details the adventures of four Christian prisoners in the Mahdi's camp, and contains the following passage:

"To account, however, for the stubborn resistance which one single Christian successfully opposed to the Prince of the Faith, he was fain to explain that Gordon was no ordinary unbeliever, but the Antichrist himself, spoken of in the prophetic passages of the Koran, whom the Mahdi is destined to overthrow before the advent of the true Messiah and the establishment of the Islamic millennium."

This communication contains several interesting details which explain some of the points already touched upon. The prisoners were three Greeks and a Copt established at Ghedarif, who, when the town was taken, were seized by the rebels.

"Their lives were spared on condition that they pronounced the Mussulman confession of faith, 'There is no God but God, and Mahomet is His Prophet,' and surrendered all their property and goods and chattels to the *Beit-ul-Mal*, or Public Treasure

House. In the presence of the Mahdi's Ameer they were then stripped of their semi-European clothing, receiving in exchange a long strip of white linen stitched with green and red—the Mahdi's colors—to wind round their loins and throw over their shoulders, a pair of leather sandals for their feet, and a gray felt cap, round which is wound a bit of green and red rag, to replace the fez. When thus arrayed in the orthodox costume prescribed by the Prophet of the Soudan they were made to recite the confession of faith, and kiss the Ameer's hands. Each of them then received from him two spears, with which they were told to strike the ground three times while uttering the Sacramental war-cry of the Mahdi's followers, '*Fih zebil Allah*' ('For the cause of God'). Immediately after the ceremony, however, the spears were taken away from them again, probably from prudential considerations."

After a few weeks of irksome bondage, "they were told to proceed with the Ameer to the Mahdi's camp, which they joined, a few days' march from Khartoum. The Mahdi, who is always styled by his followers '*Seïdna el Imaum*' ('Our Lord the Imaum or Prince of the Faith'), appears to have received them with consideration. A tent was assigned to them, and an allowance was made to them of fifteen dollars a month per head from the *Beit-ul-Mal*. Moreover, the Mahdi's personal influence was always exercised to protect them against the ill-will of his over-zealous followers, many of whom were, as is

usual in such cases, *plus Royalistes que le Roi.* Some of the leading lights in the Mahdi's camp, for instance, were much scandalized by the fact that these converts to Islam had not been duly circumcised, but the Mahdi promptly silenced the grumblers by receiving an opportune revelation that circumcision was not compulsory on adult converts. He occasionally favored them with his conversation, and used to make numerous inquiries about Constantinople, which, after Cairo and Mecca, seems to be the goal of his ambition, though, as he places it on the confines of Hindostan, his geographical notions are evidently eccentric."

Setting aside the liberty the Mahdi takes, after the example of Mahomet, as to the number of his wives, he submits to all the privations which he imposes on his followers. Tobacco and intoxicating liquors are absolutely forbidden; the sumptuary laws are very strict, and even the possession of any Egyptian or European article of dress is punished with a given number of strokes from the *kurbash.* All taxes, even the dime of the Koran, are abolished, the confiscation of Christian property, contributions from merchants, and pillage, being made to supply the *Beit-ul-Mal,* or public treasury, on which the people live. Every trace of administration has been banished in favor of the dictation of the Emirs, who are generally relations or intimate friends of the Mahdi.

70. Or for nine years. Mahomet is supposed to

have said: "The Mahdi shall be of my people; if he is to make a short stay (among you) he will remain seven (years), if not (he will remain) nine. During this time my people shall enjoy well-being the like of which has never before been known; the earth shall produce everything that is good to eat, and shall refuse them nothing. Silver shall be as common as refuse; and if any one shall say, 'Mahdi, give me something!' the Mahdi shall reply, 'Take what you want'" (*Prolégomènes*, II. 171).

71. In India also there is an opening for a Mahdi as there is a Mussulman population. A Mussulman Mahdi would, moreover, easily find a hearing among the Brahmin population, for modern Brahminism has its Mahdi—Vishnu in his last and not yet manifested Avatar, the Avatar of *Kalki*. At the end of time Vishnu is to be born of a priestly family, under the name of Kalki, and he will come on a white horse, with a flaming sword in his hand, to exterminate the barbarians. This conception, which does not appear to be of very ancient Indian origin, probably arose from the Perso-Mussulman idea of a Messiah—an idea brought into India by the conquering Mussulmans.

In 1810 a Mahdi appeared at the little town of Bodhan, about fifteen miles from Surat. He sent to the governor, Mr. Crow, the following missive, summoning him to become a convert:

"To all counsellors, and the Hakim of Surat, be it known that the Emaumul Deen of the end of the

world, or Emaum Mehdee,* has now published himself, and the name of this Durveish is Ahmud; and that in the Hindevie they call him Rajah Nukluk. Be it further known to you that if the Esslaum (the Mahometan faith) is accepted, it is better; otherwise empty the town, or, on the contrary, you may prepare for battle. This fakir is now come down from the fourth sky, with four bodies, combining Adam (on whom be peace!), Essah, the son of Mariama (Jesus, the Son of Mary), and Ahmud (on whom be peace!); and they have all four come upon one place; they have no guns nor muskets with them, but a stick and a handkerchief are with me—be yourself prepared."—Dated 11th Zilhij, corresponding with 17th January, 1810. H. G. Briggs, *Cities of Gujaráshtra*. Part II., Appendix.

The author of this strange epistle was attacked at Bodhan by two squadrons, and killed with a few hundred of his followers fighting desperately for the new faith.

72. [John, the present King of Abyssinia, boasts a direct descent from King Solomon, and, although a Christian, is so proud of this, that he endeavors in every possible way to imitate his august ancestor. Some years ago he founded an Order which he called "Chatem Suleiman"—Solomon's Seal, and he commissioned an Italian, Signor Nardi, to execute for him a throne which was to be an exact copy of Solo-

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* The *Imâm eddin*, the chief of religion, or *Imâm Mahdi.*

mon's famous throne, pictures of which are extant in Abyssinian books. This throne has recently been completed, and great rejoicings were held at its inauguration. It is made of silver gilt, as the required gold was probably beyond the means of his sable majesty's treasury.—A. S. B.]

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

By Ada S. Ballin, Author of a "Hebrew Grammar."

A.

THE MAHDI OF 1884–5.

Of the private life of Ahmed Mohammed, the Mahdi of 1884, but little is known. He lives simply, and himself observes the strict discipline which he imposes on his followers, over whom he exercises a paternal influence. He, however, exceeds in the number of his wives the orthodox four prescribed in the Koran; but in this he only imitates the example of Mahomet, who, as far as regards women, seemed rather to urge his people to "do as I say, not as I do," on the "preach but don't practise" principle. He is, nevertheless, extremely consistent in supporting his own dignity, and in his endeavors to impose his religion not only on the Arabs, but also upon Europeans. The following letters will illustrate this characteristic. The first was addressed by him to

the population of Arabia* in the form of a proclamation:

"Before God and the Prophet, I declare that I did not take up the sword to found a kingdom on earth, or to gather treasures for myself and live in a fine palace; but to bring consolation and succor to the faithful; to deliver them from bondage; and in order that the reign of the Moslems should shine forth once more in its ancient splendor. I am therefore resolved to advance from Khartoum on Dongola, Cairo, and Alexandria, and in each of those cities to hand over the power and government to the Moslems. I shall march from Egypt to the Land of the Prophet, to drive out the Turks, who govern no better than the unbelievers, and I shall transfer the country, with its two holy towns, to the sons of Ismael. Be assured, O ye sons of Ismael! that in a little time I will be with you, sword in hand."

The second was brought to Sir Charles Wilson, on January 29th, by a dervish bearing a flag of truce. It ran thus:

"The Mahdi's Letter.

"In the name of the merciful God! Thanks for the honorable God and prayers be to our Apostle Mahomed.

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* See *Daily Telegraph*, March 24, 1885.

"From the poor servant of God, Mohamed El Mahdi, son of Abdullah, to the English officers and the Shaggieh and all their followers.

"First thing, surrender yourselves and you will be safe. I briefly tell you, perhaps God will direct you in the way of the righteous. Let it be known to you that the city of Khartoum and all the neighborhood thereof has been destroyed by the power of God Almighty, which no one can oppose. This thing was done through us; everything is now in our hands. As long as you are a small force and very likely in our hands you can do whatever you like, either give yourselves up and prevent bloodshed of the servants of the creatures of God, who are in your hands, and the grace and the peace of God and his Apostle will settle upon you. If you do not believe what I have written, and you want to know the reality about Khartoum, send a special messenger from yourselves to come here and assure yourselves of the truth of the information, and the peace of God and his Apostle be with your messenger. We shall not kill you till he comes here and sees all about the matter for himself, and we will send him back with a safe escort from us. As God says in his precious Book, 'If any of the ungodly come to you, you must keep him safely until he listens to the words of God, and then do for him whatever he wishes.' If, on the other hand, you like to fight, we shall not oppose your wish. If it were not that we pity you, we would not have written this letter to you. If you yield, you should know that the

peace of God will settle upon you, and you will be saved from all hurt. If you do not wish to yield, you shall be punished in this world and the next. It is known that victory is for the believers. You must not be proud of your steamers and many other things. If you do not yield to my advice you shall repent. You must be quick, or your wings will be cut. A man who guides the people in the right way, God will guide him also aright.

"11th Rabbeah Tani, 1302.

"P.S.—No God but one God. Mohamed is the Apostle of God.

"Mohamed El Mahdi, Son of Abdullah."

The Mahdi has accomplished the nationalization of the land, and abolished rents and taxes, his Treasure House (see note 69) being replenished by plunder from the enemy, property confiscated from "unbelievers," voluntary offerings, and forced contributions, chiefly obtained from merchants. Apparently he has recently been somewhat in difficulties as regards money, for a telegram from Dongola dated April 20, 1885, says:

"The Arabs on the White Nile, above Khartoum, are said to be deserting the Mahdi, who is robbing every one possessed of anything worth seizing."

The rebellion which broke out against him in the early part of April, under the leadership of a Sheikh, named Migummi, had its origin in a quarrel about treasure. A telegram from Cairo, dated April 20th,

stated that: "The rebel troops have left Berti and Sani for Berber, which is in open rebellion against the Mahdi."

It is quite in harmony with what we have learnt from the preceding pages, that another Mahdi should arise to dispute the claims of Ahmed Mohammed, by proclaiming him to be *Deddjlâ*, the false prophet, who is to precede the true Mahdi. This we find had actually happened, and a letter dated March 12th, from El-Obeid, has been published in an Arab newspaper describing the triumphal entry into that town of Muley Hassan Ali, the so-called Anti-Mahdi. He was mounted on a white horse, holding a drawn sword in his right hand, which he declared to have been given to him by Mahomet, in order to kill Mohammed Ahmed and drive the Infidels out of Egypt. He was accompanied by the Dervish of El-Obeid, and followed by prisoners and his adherents also bearing drawn swords. As he passed along the people bowed down before him, kissing the ground and invoking blessings on his head. He entered the mosque and remained there some time in prayer. During this time a mound of earth was raised outside, and on it was placed a translation of the Koran, given by Mohammed Ahmed to the Dervish of El-Obeid, with injunctions that it was to be presented to Muley Hassan Ali, with the object of converting him.

"When the Anti-Mahdi came out of the mosque he addressed the people, saying he hoped soon to fulfil the mission entrusted to him by the Prophet, and to

expose and punish the impostor who had sent him a false translation of the Koran. The Dervish then handed him a torch, with which he set fire to the document."

Later reports state that the two Mahdis have met in battle for the second time, with the result that the original Mahdi was defeated and lost two of his provincial governors. Should these reports be true, Ahmed Mohammed will soon go to swell the list of false prophets, and Muley Hassan Ali's star will be in the ascendant until he in turn falls, to give place to another ; for, as has already been observed, a Mahdi can only exist as long as he is successful.

B.

THE SIEGE OF KHARTOUM.

So few have been the particulars concerning this memorable siege which have yet reached the British public, that any which appear are endowed with a value perhaps higher than they intrinsically merit, and I therefore feel justified in quoting those which have come to hand. According to the interesting article published in the *Standard* for March 4th (see note 69)—

"The number of fighting men congregated before Khartoum seems to have been very fluctuating, sink-

ing sometimes to seven or eight thousand, and again rising to forty and fifty thousand, according to the seasons and the requirements of agricultural pursuits, as no impediment was ever placed in the way of their going off, sometimes for weeks together—the fellaheen to look after their crops and harvests, the Bedouins to graze their camels, and their flocks and herds. When in camp their time was wholly devoted to prayers, recitations from the Koran, and sham fights, often on a large scale. The actual number of properly drilled and disciplined troops, chiefly blacks from El-Obeid, was relatively very small, nor did they seem to be implicitly trusted by the Mahdi. On the other hand, the enthusiasm of the Dervishes, as the Mahdi's true followers are styled, appeared to be wrought up to the highest pitch by the Prophet's fervent preachings, and to be in no way abated by the repeated checks they experienced before Omdurman."

Thus much for those outside the city; but more fraught with interest for the English is what went on inside its walls. The military correspondent of the *Daily News* was fortunate enough to encounter at Korti an Egyptian who had formed one of the garrison and to obtain from him the following narrative which there is reason to believe is authentic.*

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* By kind permission of the manager of the *Daily News* I am enabled to reprint the following interesting narrative, which appeared in the form of letters published in the issues of that paper on April 16th and 22d.

"We had a grand illumination the night Gordon arrived. If all Christians were like him all men would become Nazarah; but you do not follow the teachings of your own Prophet as we Mussulmans do. Gordon told us he had come to save us. The officials and Greeks illuminated their houses as you saw Khartoum illuminated on the anniversary of the restoration of the 'Effendina' (Khedive), and every native Soudanese, however poor, lit his lamp; but soon bad tidings came day by day of the approach of the cursed Arabs. Soon we saw them, first in small bodies at a distance, and then in large ones. They had been hovering around us a long time before the Pacha arrived. Now Gordon set every man to work; he threw up a long parapet with a deep trench from the Bahr-el-Abiad to the Bahr-el-Azrek, and he built round towers on it and made one iron gate. He did not turn out Arabs from dwelling in Khartoum; there were none there, though we had many traitors. They were known to the Pacha, but he said, 'Let them alone; at the end they shall be punished.' Among these was the principal baker. At first natives used to bring in provisions every day through the gate Gennet, in the Mogr quarter, near Gennet-el-Noor (the Garden of Light). The boats crossed over there by the dockyard, and brought from the country all sorts of provisions. You remember when you lay sick at Gordon's old house over the post-office, how refreshing was the sight at early morning of boatloads of huge sweet water-melons. The boats

continued to bring across their cargoes for the two months when melons are in season (May and June). What splendid piles they made on the shore! No wonder you were tempted to eat of them, in spite of the order of Georgio Demetrio, the doctor. I tell you, he remained at Khartoum to the last. Many houses belonged to him, and he had families by three wives. Gordon used to say to all who wanted to leave, 'Stay, my friends. The English are coming.' That handsome girl of sixteen, his daughter, remained; so did the German tailor, Herr Klein, and his wife and pretty daughter. He had resided twenty-five years there. I cannot say who the European women were that left in the steamer with Colonel Stewart, or whether any did.

"Soon after Gordon's arrival Sheikh Wad-abou-Gurgy made three forts opposite Khartoum on the Bahr-el-Azrek; for the time was now at hand when we were to be beleaguered. In these he placed three cannon, for his designs were evil—he was rebellious. These forts were near the gardens of Boussi, and now he piled up outside great pyramids of dhoora, three times higher than the forts themselves. When these things were related to Gordon in the early morn (for these piles were made at night) he despatched three steamers, the *Boudain*, the *Mansoua*, and the *Talahowen;* these fired first ball, then shell, to knock down walls, and they succeeded. Mahomet Ali Pacha, commanding ships, ran ashore, and landed troops, while shrapnel was covered to command their

advance. The black soldiers then stormed the fort, while the Bashi-Bazouks took the outer circle. Many Arabs were killed, and all the dhoora captured and ammunition. After Moulid (anniv. birth Mahomet) Wad Sheikh El Obeid came opposite Khartoum to the other side of Bahr-el-Azrek, and encamped on this isle. Gordon Pacha sent for the troops under Hassein Abraham and Mahomet Abu Said, who had been made pachas by Gordon Pacha. You remember large domes seen from your window over the Post-office—*taib;* those were sepulchres of mighty sheikhs of former days. One Englishman was buried there too. Why not? Directly we landed we formed a four-deep square, such a formation as you know we always kept when marching with Hicks Pacha. Was it ever broken when we marched from Rawa to Gebelain? You know it was not—*taib.* Even so we marched boldly from shore. One gun is at an angle of the square. They charged us furiously; but, ha! how they scampered! Shattered was that great band of rebels! It was near that spot we did battle with the rebel; the place was called Malaah. It was higher up than the island of Tuti. We had 500 men. Now I must tell you of a wicked act of treachery. Landing from the steamers we at once attack the enemy. They run, routed, on account of our furious fire; but now what I have to relate fills my heart with grief. The traitor Abraham takes off his tarbash, puts it in his breast, from which he takes a dervish's cap, putting it on his head. Next to this

what does he do? He gallops up to the bugler, and tells him to sound the 'kus-rah' ('retreat'; this in military Turkish signifies defeat). The brave boy refused, and said, 'Pacha, we are not defeated; and I will not sound as you order.' Then he cleaves the brave boy's head with his scimitar, and smites others who would not turn. Now, when our enemies see these things come to pass, they, who had been in fear and trembling, gain heart, return, and attack us again. We become disorganized—why not? We fly back to the outworks and huts we had left, close to the cemetery. But we did not let the traitorous Pacha escape. We circle round his horse and compel him to retire with us; much does he struggle, beg, and protest; he had endeavored to escape; but escape for him was not. I cannot tell you what the other Pacha did; I did not observe; but this man—maledictions on his soul! *ma yeshuf el nœm*—may he never see luxury! (paradise)—slew several of our soldiers. But we were too quick for him; we brought him back, bound hand and foot.

"Now all these things (continued my informant), and how the traitorous Pacha had been the cause of our disgrace, Gordon Pacha had spied from the top of his house. He was much grieved; and when the wicked Pachas, who were both guilty, were brought bound, as I said, hand and foot before him, he spake never a word except 'Away with them!' He was reading Holy Writ at the time. They were tried by court-martial, and sentenced to death. Seven days

afterwards they were executed in the inner yard, near the large square of the prison. They were hewn in pieces by a halbert. I saw the execution, so it is of no use your saying 'they were shot.' I tell you, according to Turkish military law, a military traitor is always sentenced to be cut to pieces. The two were bound up against the wall by chains and rings. Two soldiers armed with sharp hatchets approached them from out of the sides of the square we had formed. The prisoners' crime was read out, and their sentence. A hundred soldiers were present, some senior officers, but not Gordon Pacha. The senior Bey cried out, 'Executioners perform sentence on the traitors!' Immediately these advanced close, and lopped off first their arms above the elbows, then the legs above the knees, then cut their bodies in twain, then decapitated them. They died not till they were cut asunder; then their heads fell on their breasts, and they expired with a hideous yell. Surely their fate was deserved! I cannot say whether Gordon Pacha knew of this manner of execution. I tell you this is the Turkish mode of punishing military traitors, and it is a just punishment.

"You would like to know the story of our lives from day to day, but every day was like yesterday, and yesterday and to-day like to-morrow; therefore perhaps I do not tell you correctly in order as things occurred. Who could? There were days and nights of watching; we were like dogs guarding sheepfolds from the wolf or hyena; but we were not down-hearted. Gordon kept saying to us, 'Pa-

tience, the English are coming—are coming. God watches over you.' He was a good man. 'My faith in God never fails,' he said; 'neither let yours.' In the morning the band would play to him early as he used to sit in the kiosque you will remember across the road at the wall, over the Nile. He took his coffee there; he then walked up and down on the top of his house. After this he commenced the business of the day in the rooms of the first story of the Palace. Many officials now visited him; among others the big European Doctor, Macolopo Bey, the Austrian and French Consuls, Georgio Demetrio (the Doctor), the Mudir of the Mudireah, Ali Jeleb, and the Vakeel Mahomet Abdullah. The former stayed to the last; the other was killed with Gordon. Then came the chief butchers and bakers. Often a woman visited him called Zenoba. She was very wealthy; she used to pay into the Mudireah some sixty or seventy thousand dollars at a time; lent to Government on Gordon's security or note of hand. She owned many shops, mills, and nuggars. She was an Egyptian, wife of Hadj Mahomet, wood-turner. Suleiman Esyah, too, a chief merchant in Khartoum, used to lend money. He occupied two houses in the upper market. After this, at mid-day, Gordon Pacha took his lunch. Business was renewed in the afternoon. At evening time he would ride along the intrenchments from Blue to White Nile. The enemy were always firing in a desultory way. By accident people used to be hit day after day.

"Soldiers lined the trenches all day and night. There were four guns there, two pointing towards Bahr Abead, one facing from the iron gate near the cemetery, one facing the village of Burdi. Of the crowds of blacks you speak of living in the poor quarters of Khartoum Gordon made soldiers. All men were compelled to carry arms, regular soldiers got rations of dhoora, the others got Government biscuit. We were always expecting, from dawn to sunset, from sunset to dawn, the arrival of the English. Whenever we heard news of them our hearts rejoiced. The Arabs have a fear of the English, dating back from the time of Arabi's defeat. They believe they carry with them a piece of wood which they can extend to any height, that up this they climb, and spy their enemies at any distance.* Now this I tell you, their terror of you is so great that they will never face you again. The sheikhs have informed Mahomet Achmet that unless he leads them forth to do battle they will not fight; this is since the battle of Abou Tlea—not Klea—as you called it. All were at first loyal in Khartoum, except a few of the head men—such as the chief baker and butcher; but Gordon, who well knew these men to be traitors, said, 'Suffer them to remain on at their work; we will show them what justice is when the English come.' As time wore on and provisions were become short by reason of the strictness of the siege—for the Arabs were

* This idea they get probably from the Heliograph.

closing around—Gordon sent away all the old men and women who were unable to work, out of Khartoum; they were afraid to go at first, but Gordon gave them an introduction to Mahomet Achmet, writing as follows: 'Be kind to these; treat them well, I charge you. Behold, I have kept and fed all these for four months; try how you will like doing so for one month.'* Mahomet Achmet accepted them, and they are with him to this day.

"As it was at the time of the Tou el Kebeah (great flood); as it will be at El Achrah (last day); as it has often been when in cities of the earth enemies have been knocking at the gate without, they bought and sold; they married and were given in marriage; yes, there were the usual nuptial rejoicings—the bride soon, alas, to be sold into slavery! Mashallah! It was their kismet. There were the same gatherings round fires you remember witnessing when the Ihrunnahgah (dancing girls) danced in the middle their ghan-ahghat to the tune of the terbukat. The festivities and feastings took place nightly. The Soudanese are a

* This was told me on two different occasions by more than three Bishareen Arabs who had come from Onderman—the same who told me of Gordon's fights; but it was thought most improbable by the military authorities—and it was not thought desirable to telegraph this. I therefore withdrew the news from my telegram. I have since had confirmation of this from good authorities who were in Khartoum, and who told me of this unasked. I am aware there is no mention of this in Gordon's diary.

light-hearted people even when a cloud hangs over them. You would have thought nothing was going amiss. It is true they believed the English were coming. Spirits were sold at high prices; date-spirit two reals a pint bottle; vermouth, two and a half. Meanwhile nothing was bought from outside; nothing brought in. The town was surrounded before the big feast, Eade-el-Kebar.

"I cannot say when, for one day was the same as the other, but one day Gordon saw coming from afar two foot-messengers across the desert from the Bahr Abiad from opposite El Kalakli. He ordered the sentinels to let them pass in peace. They waved a white flag, and cried, 'Salamu ah la cum.' They said they were ambassadors from Wad-el-Jumma, Ameer of Mahomet Achmet. We replied in words signifying, 'Peace and mercy of God.' Gordon had them escorted to the Palace, and made them partake of coffee, and sit down on a carpet prepared for them, as is the custom. They produced two dervishes' coats and one cap, a rosary, and sandals. 'These,' said they, 'are sent by Wad-el-Jumma, Ameer of our Lord, the long-expected one.' They had a letter beginning 'Hod dale wah dolan.' This was the sense of it: 'Take these and Islam, and go home to your country—you and the sons of Errect (Egypt), and leave Soudan (Country of the Blacks) to its relations (literal); and on you be the safety of God and the Prophet; and we will lower you (let you down) with safety (*i.e.*, in good faith).' Gor-

don took these things and gave them a koflan (robe), pair of boots, tarbash (red fez with blue tassel), and waist-vest, typical of Egyptian costume, saying, 'Give these to Wad-el-Jumma. Tell him, Islam enter the Government, as you are a coward (literally man frightened).' He added, 'The other man is a clever man and brave.' These men were dressed as dervishes. Gordon gave them twenty-five dollars backshesh. As they left they said, 'Remember we have plenty of soldiers and Arabs.' At this time Mahomet Achmet was at El-Obeid. The 'other man,' he alluded to, Wad-Abou-Gergee, had brought 1,000 men to Gordon. Before this Gordon went out to fight him, and beat him near the outer gardens of Bouri; he took all their dhoora and arms. Wad-Abou-Gergee kept on writing to Gordon, negotiating a surrender. These 1,000 soldiers got into Khartoum. Why did he not come in himself? Because he stayed out to entice others in—mixed Egyptians, Soudanese, and Turkish soldiers drilled by Turks. But Wad-Abou-Gergee was played a shabby trick by two men, Soudanese, named Wade Jerkock, a merchant, and Wad-ma-quoi, chief butcher. These wrote to Wad-el-Jumma, saying, 'O Sheikh, Wad-Abou-Gergee has given the Turks 1,000 men and arms (all Egyptians are called Turks).' When Wad-el-Jumma read this he was wroth, and, catching Wad-Abou-Gergee, enchained him. The messengers were dismissed at the gate Bawabit-el-Mussel Lamieh; Gordon made it near Boussi.

"I would now tell you of the battle of El-effoon, two days' march towards Sennaar. Sheikh El-Obeid (?), Mahomed Ali Pacha, commanded. I went up with the soldiers to battle with 500 Bashi-Bazouks. On the first day we found Arabs in a building, and drove them out. On the second day we were marching up to a village called Omdoban (Mother of Flies). We attacked the rebels under a dervish, and firing killed many. But we were charged by cavalry and foot. Many of us were then slain. Abou Gergee and Wed Nejûm (Son of the Stars) encamped on the sand south of Khartoum. Three months after Gordon arrived these men sat down before the place. Two sorties were made, and many of them killed. During this time we got forage for our horses from Tuti. Our guns could play on the island. From there, too, melons and cucumbers were brought. And now I would tell you about the steamers. One plied between the rocks—En Mogrin and Khartoum—with one gun. The Arabs intended putting wires across the river at Gebel Ain; but the force of the water broke these. Gordon did not cut them. Behind the trenches were tents, one for twenty-four men; one man kept guard at the trench for the twenty-four; thus we lived, eat, drank, slept, prayed, day and night.

"We were besieged thrice, and thrice we defeated the enemy. We killed many when we attacked Omdurman, but more came on like swarms of flies. Having killed some, their numbers were forthwith trebled.

"I forgot to say how Omdurman was taken from us. It was thus: Hicks Pacha built a big trench round it—well, perhaps it was there when you came. Gordon built an inner one; or perhaps it was the reverse. At any rate there were two rings. The rebels crept in between the two and were thus protected. Then they cut off the little garrison's water. Thus was Omdurman taken.

"Gordon lived alone with his servant in his palace. Power Bey lived in the Genesi (church of the Roman Catholic mission) to guard the ammunition which was kept in the cloisters. He superintended the making of powder. Colonel Stewart used to superintend the taking out of the powder and its distribution, and was also engaged in looking out. Such was our daily occupation in that city, whose kismet was already written.

"Yes; they used to fish, as in your time, with hooks and nets, and catch those great fish with heads like cats and long whiskers—the kabaross. (This is a common fish in the Upper Nile; they call it 'cat-fish,' from its head, I believe. It is, I think, a kind of barbel, and when dressed well is of a very fair taste.) You could put one on a homar (ass). You could rest its head on the donkey's head, and its tail on the animal's tail. There was also the el edgil (calf-fish).

"We had still tobacco and shoes, for there were shoemakers in the city. We strolled when off duty through the bazaar as usual. Some would gamble

with dominoes; some drink merissa, and the young men would dress to please the young girls—with cane under arm and cigarette in mouth. Bargains would be struck, and houses sold, as if the end was not. I am told it has been so with great cities in time of siege. It was so, a Jew told me, with his city in Syria. Do not blame me when I dwell on this: I am a different man. Have I not lost a wife—I had only one—and children? With the young girls, too, there was plaiting of hair and anointing with butter, and ornamenting necks, ankles, and arms with gold chains and shells. They would sit in the bazaar selling onions and eggs and melons, and butter and sweetmeats up to the day I left, and would laugh and joke with their admirers, and courtship would go on, like butterflies, heedless.

"We went to mosque, too, crowds of us, and the 'zikkah' was said (in remembrance). We pray for departed spirits—that they may be in luxury. Why not?

"Gordon's paper notes went round like cash. They were looked upon as money. They were mostly one-piastre notes; others for five and ten piastres (a real, or guinea) up to five hundred piastres. All mine are gone. I spent them in the desert, where I would buy water, a cup for ten piastres.

"The schools went on as usual, Mohammedan; also at the Genesi, till the priests (Italian) left. The little German tailor, Klein, remained till the last; twenty-five years had he resided in Khartoum. His wife and

four daughters remained too. They did not go with Stewart, I am sure.

"There were several white women there when I left—daughters of Europeans by Abyssinian wives, whom they had bought. There were two or three ladies at the Austrian Consul's. I think all these had so many family ties they would not leave; besides, Gordon always said, 'The English are coming.'

"I do not know that your coming would have altered matters; for this I tell you advisedly—the will of God says it.

"There were traitors in our midst; they met and took counsel together against Gordon Pacha. He was warned, but said, 'Suffer it to be so.'

"The plan was to deliver over the city whenever the English drew near. The number of traitors increased daily as they got hopeless. Another thing, and this decided many: after the battle of Abou Tlea the rebels went down and collected all the helmets they could find. They showed these to us, waving them outside the trenches and saying, 'Thus and thus have we eaten up the Feringhees.' Thus even faithful men were sorely tempted and became sick at heart.

"At night the enemy used to be often at the south end, at speaking distance; and we used to revile each other. We were called the cursed rebels who speak evil of the fathers and mothers to the third and fourth generation. We would call them 'sons of dogs' (wadho kelps) (I should think our word whelp comes

from this), and shout, 'Allah bou rou Gehenna, ye rebellious ones; malediction on your fathers; depart to Gehenna;' and they would answer, 'Ye are slaves of the Infidels; ye too are Infidels, as you do not believe in our book. We will eat you up, and wipe you from the face of the earth of Allah.'

"Thus and thus did we call out to each other during the long night.

"The English stayed too long at Matumna; perhaps had they gone on at once the gates would not have been opened; but still I tell you treachery was planned long before. The rebels came over at night; or at any rate before dawn, when Tenza and another opened the gate.

"The last river trip was made by Tujerat Mahaba. He had on board two Krupp guns. He started at seven A.M.; at ten he met a nuggar full of rebels. They had a gun. They fired at each other for an hour. At last the rebel boat sunk. He was still under a heavy fire till he reached Shembat. At Bou the rebels had one Krupp, four guns higher up, and one mitrailleuse or Nordenfeldt. He ran aground. Here he is—he will tell you the story."

A tall, stout black here entered my tent (writes the correspondent), and kissed my hand. He wore naval uniform—three stripes on arm, and Gordon's medal.

"Ha!" I said, referring to these, "you at least have kept yours." The others had been selling their lead medals given by Gordon in camp. I deprecated this much; but the reply I invariably met with was—"If I don't buy it, some one else will."

"I," said the captain (he was the chief of all the boats), "would not part with mine for £1,000." He continued:

"The last words Gordon said were, 'Bring the English when you come back, if only three or four;' but I was never to see him more. I have left my wife and children at Khartoum! He has told you I sank the rebel vessel. Well, I was fired at from all directions. I rammed her. I had 150 soldiers on board; she had plenty. Down they all went—it was a glorious sight! None escaped. On passing Rezaree I was fired at by 150 riflemen, but continued my voyage till I got to Gebel-el-Sheikh-el-Taeb (the good Sheikh). The shots fell short. On the river, near Mashed-el-Hamar (donkey's pasture)—six hours from Khartoum—I went upon a rock; then three mountain guns opened fire on me. Three hours afterwards three steamers came, the *Boudain*, *Telehowah Tepagny*, and *Sophia*. Troops were landed, and we killed many Arabs. I used to be captain of Hicks Pacha's ship, and flew the Pacha's flags. Many times I have taken you down to Omdurman, and I saw you up at Kowa, but you were on shore. General Hicks was very kind, but I was a small Reiss then. If Gordon had lived I should have become as high as this tree—pooh! I have left a thousand of Gordon's notes at Khartoum with my family, and all my clothes.

"Latterly the chief men of the town were traitors; all were concerned in opening the gates. They were afraid of starving. This I tell you, and I do not lie.

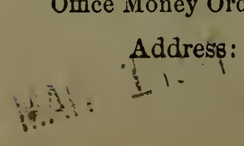
All the white and all the black women are now made slaves. My poor wife, I shall never see her again. When I say white I mean also those whose mothers were Abyssinian and fathers European, and there were some Turkish ladies who wore the achmet, wives of officers; all will now be slaves. I have finished. I must leave you."

He had to present himself to Captain Baker, R.N., who himself was with Sir Samuel Baker up the Nile.

Sergeant-Major Hannoar, of the Commissariat, was enabled to assist in interpreting, he having a perfect knowledge of the language, as they spoke. He is the clever son of a missionary, and was born near Jerusalem. He is extremely able, speaking five languages. I trust he may rise, as a useful man such as he is not met with every day.

My interview for the time was now over, and the two gallant men took their departure, seeming depressed and sorrowful. These men had a genuine love for Gordon; you could feel this in every word when they referred to him. "Ah!" they would ejaculate, "no one like him on this earth."

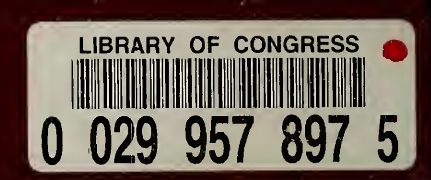
THE END.










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